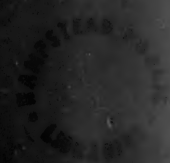


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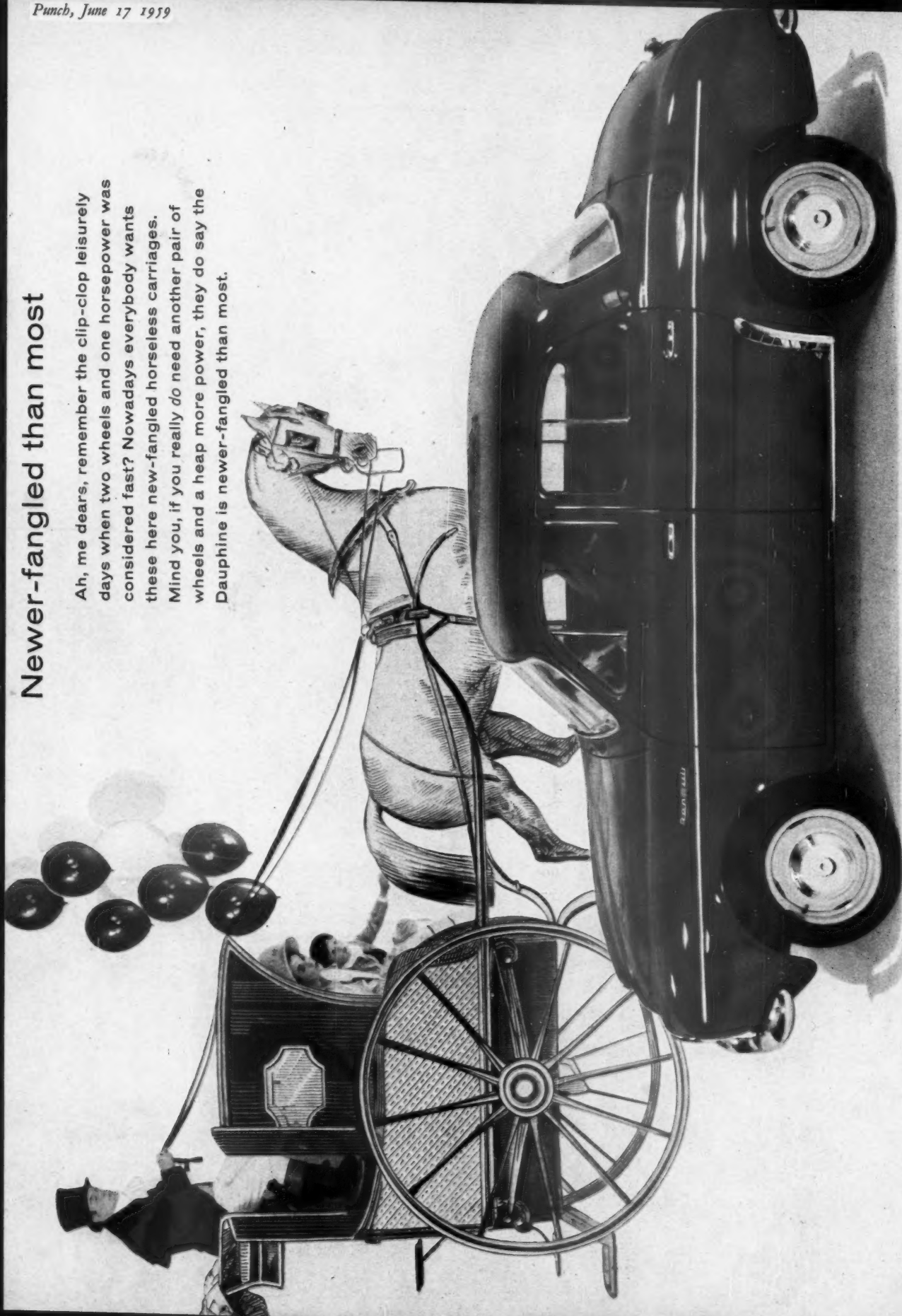
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Newer-fangled than most

Ah, me dears, remember the clip-clop leisurely days when two wheels and one horsepower was considered fast? Nowadays everybody wants these here new-fangled horseless carriages. Mind you, if you really *do* need another pair of wheels and a heap more power, they do say the Dauphine is newer-fangled than most.



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PUNCH

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The London Charivari

"I COULD hardly believe my eyes.

It looked as though your parks had been turned into bedrooms with people lying all over the place"—thus Dr. Billy Graham explaining his embarrassed flight from Hyde Park and its courting couples. If it is no use reminding the evangelist that his eyes should be cocked at the distant hills, then I should like to put up a meteorological apology for our apparent discourtesy to sensitive Americans. By my reckoning the number of days in our English summer when one can lie on one's back in comfort and look at the sky is 24.35, and L.C.C. chairs, which are not comfortable, cost 4d. a session. Dr. Graham should switch his thoughts to the Channel Tunnel project and warn us about the Gallic naughtiness that must inevitably filter through the chalk under La Manche.

Quite Comfortable?

STATE Registered nurses may have been a bit puzzled to read that Britain's



flying saucer is called S.R.N.1. However, I suppose it made sense when the reports described how it rested "on a cushion of compressed air."

Snows of Yesteryear

MR. HEATHCOAT AMORY's yachting mishap, when he ran aground off the Isle of Wight, caused all Opposition cartoonists a bitter pang of frustration.



Gold and dollar reserves were the trouble, dammit: what fun to have drawn the Chancellor on the rocks, if only he had been.

Athlete's Feat

WHEN Miss Mary Bignal jumped 20 ft. 8½ in. the other day she had the bad luck to have a gust of wind behind her, and so has little chance of having her eximious leap ratified as a British record. Now that athletics are, to all intents and purposes, records, any feat achieved with natural assistance should be admissible. After all the Boat Race is rowed when the tide is likely to be at its best. Similarly athletic meetings should be held on unsheltered grounds at the time of year when there's most chance of a half-gale from the north east (now that would sort out the genuine enthusiasts). Sprung tracks, oxygenated air, and shot-put sited to make maximum use of the magnetic pole suggest themselves. By the time that

PUNCH AND THE PRINTING DISPUTE

A printing dispute has made it impossible for us to produce a PUNCH of normal format. We apologize to our readers.



"As we revert to Latin I want IVa to know that our month of Russia has not been entirely wasted."

all these possibilities have been exhausted science ought to be giving the high-jumpers a chance to see what they can do on the moon.

No Takers

BRITISH employers were pleasantly surprised at the recent trade union call for the scrapping of nuclear weapons. It was nice to think there was something they didn't want.

Snobbery

EVERY day I see from my bus a shop-front bearing the words SPIC AND SPAN—NOBILITY CLEANERS. Is it the nobility who does the cleaning, or do Messrs. Spic and Span (I suspect the names to be pseudonymous) earn their living cleaning the nobility? If the latter, I should hardly have thought their present premises in Pimlico Road ideally sited; they are too far west for Mayfair and not quite far enough for Chelsea.

Just the Thing

A *Mirror* reader, coming out hotly against TV, says "crouching in front of a tiny picture with no proper meals and no fresh air isn't going to make us a race of spacemen . . ." But isn't it ideal training?

Who's for Hoop-La?

MR. MACMILLAN'S stint at the coconut shy heralded the season of fêtes and galas, surely dreaded by politicians everywhere. Does the young

M.P. ambitious for high office pause to think of the summer horrors that go with it? Making decisions in the panelled seclusion of Whitehall is one thing: bowling for a pig in the gardens of Chumpton Magna vicarage is altogether a more public and taxing affair, and subject to the inalienable rights of the press photographer to use the least flattering shot of the afternoon—the one depicting the luckless Minister with his mouth open, his hat over one ear and a curiously jellied quality about the general stance. Possibly it amuses some of us to see that Prime Ministers are ordinary men, after all. But it's a terrible shock for the rest of us, who stubbornly go on hoping that they're not.

Don't Sit in That One

I EXPECT many private individuals were delighted with the evening paper piece telling them how to make "smart beach slippers and matching kitbag holdall" out of "gaily-striped deckchair canvas," but deckchair men around our coasts are thought to be looking forward to a trying season.

Running on Air

WHEN the Saunders-Roe SRN 1 first rose on its cushion of air last week, every paper joined in an expression of amazement that I can only call unflattering. "It FLIES!" they shouted, as if they would have been less



"Fly away Peter, fly away Paul, re-enter Peter, re-enter Paul."

surprised to see it tunnelling under the ice of the North Pole. It reminded me of a story told me in Nairobi years ago by a doctor who took his native boy to see one of the enormous Handley Page biplanes which Imperial Airways used to operate on its first African trip. "There!" he said. "Isn't that wonderful?" "If the English had made a machine to fly," said the boy, "and it hadn't flown, that would have been far more wonderful."

Own Washing

IT'S all very well for the Ministry of Labour to have employed two thousand temporary staff to deal with rising unemployment, but it's hardly a method by which they can go on solving the rising unemployment problem entirely.

On My Left the B.M.A.

MIXED feelings crowd in over the doctors' condemnation of boxing. I suppose it would be nice to be spared press and TV pictures of the ringside fightgoer, enough to turn anyone's stomach as he sits at ease behind an evening shirt and cigar and watches the enjoyable blood drawn. On the other hand we are bound to regret the passing of the battle with natural weapons; despite dwindling boys' club attendances, we could fancy that at least a small section of modern youth was practising the skills of the straight left rather than the easier wrap-around right with a bicycle chain. If fists go out the doctors who showed them the way may be busier than ever. Though perhaps it isn't likely to come to this—unless they have more success with the anti-boxing campaign than they had with the anti-smoking.

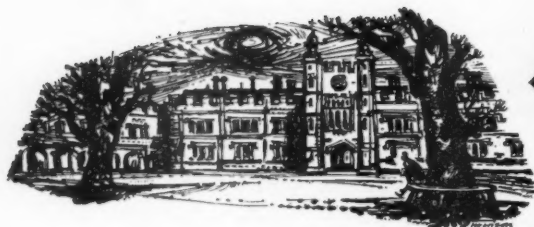
Nothing in the Papers

LAST week seemed a bit short of news for the Beaverbrook Press. The *Sunday Express* had to stretch things a bit thin with their item headed "Twins 'Much the Same,'" while the *Evening Standard*, with India struggling to avoid an innings defeat at Nottingham, came out with the newsbill "England Fights Back."

BY ROCKING CHAIR ACROSS
RUSSIA
by ALEX ATKINSON
on page 818



" . . . perhaps I am sensitive . . . but nobody loves me. I am excluded from the Nuclear Club. They call me a dictator. The English never have trusted me. People forget that France is still great . . . that man Churchill . . . Common Market . . . Spanish Champagne . . . I keep seeing Americans . . . "



A series of articles in which notable schools in fiction are revisited and reconsidered



ONCE AGAIN ASSEMBLED HERE

5 Return to Lowood by STELLA GIBBONS

"JANE, the Inspector's here. Buck up."

I laid aside pencil and paper. The livid radiance of the late November day poured its beams across the maze of intricately twisted lines which I had been tracing, and touched with fire the pale face of Helen Burns.

She was the child of a trade union leader and the only one for whom I cared a rap at Lowood School. Reader, I will not palter with you. Helen Burns's political creed was akin to Radicalism. Shrink, pale, shudder if you will; I do but write truth. Lofty and pure in spirit as the lily she resembled in pallor, her parents had sent her to Lowood in order, so they said, that she might convert her classmates to the stern and noble tenets she herself cherished. But sometimes I thought that their motives had been otherwise.

"I wish they'd leave us alone," I said. "You know I'm working for this eleven-plus. And everyone says I shall fail—small, thin, pale, with irregular features, what hope have I got?"

"Extremely little, I should think. You're pretty wet all round—and you're only a squirt, anyway. Here, put your drawing away—gosh! what's it meant to be?"

I did not feel myself to be a squirt. "It isn't meant to be anything. It came out of my subconscious," I said.

"Then your subconscious must be in a nice state of bourgeois decadence. Do get cracking—we'll be late."

"I don't care—I hate Lowood," I burst out, as we hastened across the dreary lawns, ill-cut by a local lad who

demanding ten shillings for doing it, "Helen, what is an Inspector?"

"How wet can you get? An Inspector is a man sent by the Government to see that we do our pottery and civics properly." Contempt trembled upon Helen Burns's lip, but she mastered it; her skirt fitted smoothly; her pony-tail was newly brushed. She seemed, for all her calm, inspired by fiery impulses older than her fourteen years.

"Why must we be inspected? I think it's beastly here; why haven't we got a swimming pool and a television, like that school for poor children that Aunt Reed showed me a picture of in the *Yorkshire Post*?"

"Because this is an old-fashioned, out-of-date, *private* school."

The tone of grave scorn silenced me; yet certain of the words—"private"—"old-fashioned"—had for me a secret charm. I followed Helen Burns in silence to the large room which was used as an assembly hall.

The eighty or so girls there waiting for the Inspector were all clad alike in the drab skirt, white blouse and woollen jacket which was the prescribed uniform of the place. How I longed to see something pretty and of delicate tint! These subfusc garments cost the girls' parents, with purses already strained to breaking point by taxation and the monstrous cost of necessities, a pretty penny; yet they bore the hardship proudly in order that their daughters might attend a school where they would acquire the voice and the air of ladies. It was of this secret ambition

that I suspected the parents of Helen Burns.

Miss Temple, the Head, was already seated on the low dais. Her attire offered no relief to the eye, consisting as it did of a coarse worsted jacket and skirt, and a dun-coloured body, woven of a finer wool. My eyes fastened themselves upon her very small necklet of pearls; her hair was cut short and curled by a mechanical device into rippling waves. She boasted a third-class Honours Degree in History from a provincial university.

I will not weary you, reader, by repeating the tedious rigmarole uttered by the Inspector, a Mr. Brocklehurst. His chief complaint appeared to be that we dared to despise the free milk and orange juice provided for Lowood by the Government: it had come to his ears that quantities of the latter stuff had been given away to the local public house, there mixed with gin, and afterwards sold to passing travellers at a good profit.

His complaints were uttered in a grating, nasal tone, of which, since I stood immediately below the dais with the smallest girls, I heard every syllable.

Miss Temple, pale as marble but composed, replied in a quiet voice that the orange juice had been found to be musty, or "gone off." Mutters of "Filthy muck," "Who does he think he is?" "Go roll your bowler," and such expressions, were uttered by the great girls at the back of the room.

"Well, some folks can't afford to be choosy," pronounced Mr. Brocklehurst disagreeably at last. "The

Government doesn't enjoy paying for transport up to the ends of the earth and then seeing good stuff wasted. Public money, too. Can't go on like this indefinitely, you know," he ended warningly, and I saw a tremor, like that which the wind draws through a silken sheet of summer wheat, pass over the teachers seated behind Miss Temple on the dais.

I knew what it meant; Lowood was threatened with control by the State. Mr. Brocklehurst chanced to be a great nephew of the lady who had founded the place, and he saw it in his mind's eye, rebuilt and thrice-enlarged, as a vast multilateral school bringing instruction in basket-weaving and psychology to all the scattered villages of the hilly north. I longed for the pleasures such a change would provide, and I felt for Miss Scatcherd ("Scratchy"), one of the teachers with a taste for closely-fitting attire, as she lifted her neck and surveyed Mr. Brocklehurst with her glinting dark eye. Parents' Socials—Open Days—Staff Theatricals—gentlemen, perhaps—how she would shine at them all!

But my heart beat fast as I heard Mr. Brocklehurst begin to question Miss Temple about the girls who were to enter that year for the eleven plus.

Ignorant child that I was, I had no clear idea of what this might be. I only knew, from a chance word dropped by the under-teacher Miss Miller, uttered while repairing her shabby trousers, that all my future hopes of a life befitting my birth and station depended upon my "passing."

"Jane Eyre is our only entrant this year," I heard Miss Temple explaining. "There are a number of younger girls whose parents have announced to me their intention of withdrawing them before they reach the requisite age, and a number of girls a little older who have already—er—failed to reach quite the standard demanded. But Jane Eyre is just the right age." As she uttered the words she directed a slight downward glance and smile at my uplifted face.

"Is she, indeed?" said Mr. Brocklehurst. "I should like a word with her. Ask her to come up, please."

Miss Miller, who was seated at the end of our row, hastily put away the powder-puff which she had been stealthily passing and re-passing over her fagged, painted face, and rose.

"Come, Jane Eyre."

Trembling, but not with fear, I followed her to the dais and stepped on to the threadbare carpet that covered the ascent.

"So you're the one and only, are you, Jane?" said Mr. Brocklehurst, with pert jocularly, as he surveyed me. "I daresay you're more interested in Jayne Mansfield than exams, eh?" and he closed one of his eyes, the left one, at me, and opened it again.

"I do not know who Jayne Mansfield is," I replied.

The answer seemed to annoy Mr. Brocklehurst. He turned to Miss Temple. "You believe in keeping them out of things up here, don't you?" he said in a disagreeable tone, but I scarcely heard her reply; I shook with emotion; a mist veiled my eyes; here was the chance to banish my ignorance.

"Please—" I began.

"Well? Please what? Speak up. Let's see what your elocution teacher has done for you—she won't like to hear you mumbling."

"What is the 'eleven plus,' please?"

A silence ensued. It deepened, reader, until you could have heard a pen drop. Not a girl moved. Miss Temple's brow was furrowed as if in pain; the French teacher had shut her eyes and appeared to be muttering some Papist or neo-Existentialist incantation; with what object, I know not.

I saw these things without it seeming to me that I did so. All my energies were bent upon catching Mr. Brocklehurst's answer.

At last he exhaled a deep breath. It was repeated by the mass of eighty girls in a sigh, as if some awesome presence had passed overhead, chilling



CHESTNUT GROVE

Wallis Mills drew for Punch from 1898 to 1940



Schoolgirl (who is not returning to school till next day, to friend).
"ISN'T IT SIMPLY TOO GHASTLY TO THINK I SHALL BE LOOKING
SOMETHING LIKE YOU TO-MORROW?"

September 15 1926

all with the shade of its wings. I continued to look up at Mr. Brocklehurst.

At last he nodded his head. "So much for education at Lowood School," he said, and turned to Miss Temple, who retreated half a pace. "What is the eleven plus?" he repeated with an emphasis indeed awful to hear. "Why, this child, this Jane Eyre, is supposed to be studying for the eleven plus, isn't she? Well," he repeated, as Miss Temple made no reply. "is she or isn't she?"

"She—is." Miss Temple's voice was so low that even I barely caught the word.

Mr. Brocklehurst gave a short laugh. He said no more; he assembled his papers and put them neatly into his case; he felt his pockets as if to assure himself that all was in order there; he clapped on his hat (I heard another low

murmur of "Go roll your bowler" from the back of the hall as he did so) and then he turned again to Miss Temple.

"Good-morning," he said. Then, fixing me with a last glance of his pale and protuberant eye, he added, "You will hear more of this." He then hastily walked from the room.

Miss Temple uttered a heavy sigh. Then to my surprise she laid her hand on my shoulder.

"Take Jane down to the village, Sheila, and buy her an ice," she said to Miss Miller, who was cowering at the foot of the dais as if frozen by the terrors of the last moments. Miss Temple raised her voice. "That will be all, girls." She hesitated. "Have no fear; all may work out for good in the end," she added.

We left the place of assembly. The ice was a strawberry cornet; the shilling for it, so Miss Miller informed me, was disbursed from Miss Temple's own pocket.

Some days later Helen Burns and I were seated in the sooty shrubbery in the exiguous garden. Lowood's originally open surroundings were now almost completely built over, and our nostrils were assailed on all sides with the reek of fish cooking in the ordinaries. But I rejoiced, my blood bounded, to the melodies resounding from the wireless sets in the neighbouring cottages.

I was idly sketching the television aerials louting bodefully on the roof of the nearest one, Helen was deep in a pamphlet, when one of the great girls, bulging out of her drab tunic, hastened up to us brandishing a quantity of popular journals; how she had obtained them I know not.

"I say, Jane," she bawled, "you've done it! The papers are full of us."

Trembling, I seized the sheets; it was true; the black print glared at me from every page; I saw many expressions of which I did not know the meaning—"Questions Asked In House on Lowood." "Lowood to be State-Controlled?" "Jane Gives the Inspector the Eyre (Air)." I dropped the papers in bewilderment.

"We're probably going to be taken over!" cried the lumpish great girl, "oh goody goody!"

"It will be only changing the hyena of Capitalism for the jackal of Trotskyism," murmured Helen, dreamily glancing up from her pamphlet. Her tone checked the bounding of my blood.

Reader, there is little more to tell. Permission was asked of my Aunt Reed for me to appear on "To-Night"; she sternly refused, and suggested Georgiana instead; my picture was taken for the *Daily Express* but it failed to please me; my dream of floating down a ruby-carpeted staircase in a snowy gown faltered, faded, and died.

Lowood was taken over by the State. I teach Creative Writing. Farewell.

Next Week:

GWYN THOMAS

on

STALKY & CO.

Wonder Horse

By H. F. ELLIS

THERE is a horse on the common outside my temporary country residence near Guildford that neighs from midnight till dawn. Or does it whinny? At any rate it makes a noise like Champion, the Wonder Horse, and every time it does it I get a picture of a frenzied creature rearing up on its hind legs and striking out boldly at nothing with its fore-feet. This is part of the penalty one pays for watching Children's Hour TV. The neighing is not followed by an outbreak of barking, or not as a rule, so I ought to be spared a mental picture of Rebel tugging at the right sleeve of some recumbent gunman, but association plays its usual tricks. And then, of course, along comes Ricky, worried but unafraid. It is a queer way to spend the night.

I don't know why the horse neighs. In the morning it is just a harmless grey thing, mouthing grass. But when midnight tolls and all the world is asleep, or trying to be, something wild and elemental comes over it and it repeatedly sends out what the dictionary well calls "the natural cry of the horse." Horses neigh as a challenge to battle or to call their mares together. I know that because I recently read *Thunderhead*, a strong story about a great white stallion that could smash the skull of a rival single-hoofed and was always rounding up mares and leading them away to a secret mountain fastness. Thunderhead had a neigh that you could hear for miles, and woe betide any other male horse that failed to make itself scarce when that fearful battle-cry rang out. With one slashing snap of his enormous teeth . . . but never mind that now.

The old grey horse out here on the common is no stallion, so that even if Thunderhead made the long journey from Wyoming to answer its wild night cries no good I suppose would come of it. But at three o'clock in the morning the imagination (or fancy, if you will) works powerfully. Those long shuddering neighs pierce the heart. Is it possible, I ask myself, that ancient subconscious yearnings are at work? That the old grey horse, sniffing the heady pre-dawn breezes, feels within itself strange primeval stirrings, an urgent call to battle? Does it, despite the

wrong done to it by man in its yearling days, still long to rally a herd of mares and lead them up to some hidden fastness on the Hog's Back? If not, what in Flicka's name is all the noise about?

Some of the night sounds of the countryside are reassuring and, up to a point, lulling; they do not all overstimulate the imagination. The goods train, for instance, whose first faint labouring *huff-huff, huff-huff* is heard around 12.15 a.m., has nothing tiresomely compelling about it. As with infinite slowness, with all the inevitability of gradualness, it huffs and puffs its way up what seems to be a tremendous gradient (invisible in daylight), nearer and nearer, louder and louder, and then at an only slightly increased tempo withdraws and dwindles away into the measureless dark, the mind is not exercised into a condition of acute wakefulness. One does not picture train-robbers lurking at the top of the bank, nor even hoboes riding the rods. If any mental response is aroused, it is only a mild wonder whether the last dim, quickening *chuff-chuff-chuff* of the 12.15 will have died quite away

before the first faint *huff-huff, huff-huff* of the 12.45 strikes the ear. The same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to a very far off pervasive thudding sound, that might be the beating of nature's heart, did it not stop for an aching five minutes every half-hour or so. It is probably some kind of pump that switches itself off when the cistern fills and starts again when the witches and hobgoblins run their baths.

The natural cry of a horse is in a very different category. It thrills and startles. It is instinct with the whistles of the wild. It is Champion pawing the air. It is Thunderhead shrilling defiance at the one-legged eagle. The placid common comes alive with unSurrey-like shapes. Bad hombres lie in ambush behind every bush. Sheriffs abound. Rebel barks and Flicka foals again. The old grey horse, with neck stretched low and head snaking this way and that over the ground, rounds up as fine a bunch of mares as ever sought sanctuary in the Devil's Punch-Bowl. Ricky and Ken, locked in a friendly tussle . . .

Enough. The reader who neither watches Children's Hour nor has read the Flicka books may well complain that he is at a loss. Nightly, between twelve and dawn, I wish that I were similarly handicapped.



"Don't just stand there, Miss Harrison—frisk him."



"Good show—considering he only hired it for the day from Self-Drive Ltd."

. . . And Keep You, Mother Machree

"LAY off him," said Mary. "You wouldn't know how to handle a fella like that. Not with your upbringing."

It had seemed an important step forward on the road to a fuller, richer life when I'd moved into the furnished bungalow with Mary, an Irish blonde just short of six feet tall, whose appearance was sensational enough to cause a traffic jam. During the brief time she'd worked with me, before she got the sack for pushing the Publicity Manager down a short flight of stairs, she'd enthralled me day after day with tales of life and love in Dublin. Owing to her size she'd been restricted in her choice of men to the ranks of heavyweight boxers, all-in wrestlers and the like, with an occasional policeman thrown in to add variety, and it was just the sort of thing I was on the look-out for. I was hoping to collect enough material for a best-seller later on.

After she left the firm she took a job

By E. M. MITCHELL

demonstrating secondhand cars, and I could hardly believe my luck when she offered me the chance of sharing this furnished room with her. I was living in furnished rooms at the time, with a landlady who was obsessed with the benefits of wool next to the skin. I expected some pretty drastic changes in my way of living once I'd moved in with Mary.

Unfortunately, as soon as we were under the same roof I found myself hemmed in with restrictions more severe than any I'd so far encountered. She'd got this notion that I'd been brought up in a country vicarage and used it to veto practically every activity which promised to be interesting. It wasn't true, of course, and she knew it, but nothing would budge her. Such tales of Irish life as now came my way were delivered more as a strong warning of the kind of thing a girl was up against

out in the hard world. "I had to break his nose with the hearth-brush before he'd let go," she'd say, "and after that he never looked the side I was on."

In the end I made a strong bid for freedom and attended a gramophone recital on my own, and it was here that I met this Irishman, a quiet man with black curling eyelashes and a nose squashed flat to one side of his face. He was living in lodgings and seemed to be missing his mother.

Mary went off the deep end when I told her he was coming round on Thursday evening to listen to our records. "But what's the harm in it?" I asked. "You're always in on Thursdays and he's very nice. He was telling me about his mother . . ." For some reason this increased her fury. "God help us!" she cried, "you're not fit to be out on your own! With that nose on him you're telling me about? He got that going round the booths or I'm a Dutchman. Ah, well! You'll have to

learn the hard way. I'll be out Thursday."

"But you can't leave me on my own!" I cried. "What will he think?"

"Pretty much what he's thinking now," she replied, "only faster. Don't worry, I'll only be in the next room but he won't know it. If he tries anything on I'll come in and take him apart with me bare hands."

Thursday found me in a state of nerves bordering on hysteria. I put on a plain blue frock and combed my hair back in a rather severe style. I didn't want him to get into trouble. Mary herself was busy assembling a vacuum flask of coffee, sandwiches and a supply of notepaper to take into the bedroom. "If he gets up to anything," she said, "just drop the tray so that it makes a clatter and I'll be in in a flash."

When Dooley arrived Mary stayed for a few moments chatting and then put on her outdoor things and said she had to go out to see a man about a car. The front door slammed and I heard, very faintly, the noise of her letting herself in again at the back. Dooley didn't seem to notice.

"That's a rum class o' girl you're living with," he said, making himself comfortable on the settee. "I don't know what me mother would make of that one. I'd a girl meself at one time, but the old lady didn't like her so I give her the air. Shall we play the gramophone?"

"I started the gramophone, but Dooley wasn't listening. He was still pursuing the theme of his mother's likes and dislikes in the way of girls. She seemed rather hard to please. By this time he'd taken a couple of cushions off the settee and laid them down one on top of the other to rest his feet on. Then he undid his waistcoat buttons and the top button of his trousers and loosened his shoe-laces.

"What do you do your hair that way for?" he asked suddenly. "I like hair fluffed out a bit, like the old lady does it. You never saw hair the like of hers—it's as white as snow and soft as thistle-down. You want to do yours the same." He took out a photograph and handed it to me. It showed a grim-faced old lady with hair like a dandelion clock and a nose squashed to one side. The nose, then, was inherited.

He wouldn't rest until I'd undone my hair and fluffed it out at the sides. Then

he went back to talking about his mother. By nine-thirty I knew practically everything there was to know about her. I'd learned that she didn't hold with book-learning for women and that she herself had no equal when it came to drawn-thread work and raising geraniums. She liked tea strong and black and plenty of milk in coffee. In her younger days she'd been a rare hand at the dancing and her voice was as sweet as a blackbird.

By nine forty-five, after I'd written down the recipe for her potato cakes, I was beginning to wonder what it would feel like to throttle, with my bare hands, an old lady with white hair as soft as thistle-down.

At ten o'clock I dropped the tray. Mary appeared as if by magic, still in her outdoor clothes. Her eye flickered momentarily over the cushions on the floor, my tousled hair and the dangling shoe-laces and gaping buttonholes. She was smiling.

"I have to go back into town, Mr. Dooley," she said softly, "I'll run you home."

"Mr. Dooley's been telling me all about his mother," I began wildly. "He . . ." "Has he, now?" said Mary.

"I'd like to hear about his dear old mother back in Ireland meself." Her accent seemed to have become broader.

She swept him out to the car, still doing up his buttons. After they'd gone I burst into tears. I'd no idea what might be in store for him.

It was three-quarters of an hour before Mary came in, stripping off her gloves with the satisfied air of one who has done a good job. "There," she said, "that's taken care of him. He's out on the moors with a good three miles in front of him and it's raining like the devil. I got him out of the car to have a look at the rear light and left him."

I burst into tears again. "You'll have to go out again and pick him up," I sobbed. "He hadn't done anything wrong. He was only telling me about his mother!" I told her about the drawn-thread work and the thistle-down hair and the way she liked her tea and showed her the recipe for the potato cakes. "You can't do that to him!" I cried. "You'll have to go and fetch him!"

Mary listened impassively. "No," she said, "we'll leave him where he is. A good long walk and a drop of water never did that class o' fella any harm!"



"I think Grand-dad's seized up again."

The Twins of St. Germain-des-Prés

By ERIC KEOWN

OF all the thousands of cafés in Paris two are in a class by themselves. They stand side by side, separated by a neutral bookshop, and sharing a piece of pavement a hundred yards long. It is the most influential pavement in the whole city, for highbrow opinion tends to be made here. On it Gérard de Nerval once walked his pet lobster on a blue ribbon, and things have been very much the same ever since. It is the meeting-place of the coteries—of writers, dramatists, poets, painters, critics and the dottier sort of politician, and of all the bearded pards who live by juggling with other people's wits. All kinds of -isms have been born and nourished here; here some of the wilder ones have been drowned overnight in talk.

Very profitably and very respectfully the *Café de Flore* and *Les Deux Magots*

share all this power and glory under quite separate ownership, contented rivals for the favours of the *avant-garde*. Their waiters stay for ever, grave hawk-eyed diplomats; their decoration is sober, with no concession to strip-lighting or chromium. As if to compensate for the uninhibited ideas they generate they remain solidly conservative, and on the crossing by the ancient church of St. Germain-des-Prés they are open for seventeen hours a day to what is still the most exciting cross-section of Paris.

On the bourse of intellectual estimation their stock fluctuates imperceptibly. In the 'forties the *Deux Magots* cornered the surrealists, the *Flore* the existentialists. All square. It is very hard to assess their relative positions at any given moment, but my rough guess is that at present the *Flore* appeals to

the rather older, who use it almost as a club, while the *Deux Magots* attracts a younger and more shifting crowd. Although a group will be loyal to its adopted café its members will sometimes drop in next door. A whole movement, seen sipping its apéritifs for months, will suddenly evaporate, and this is accepted in St. Germain as one of the facts of life. When the fame of these cafés reached the guide-books, their clientèle became diluted by tourists eager to see the lions, who may well turn out to be bourgeois in disguise. So the regional game is sorting out the genuine from the bogus . . .

NOTES

Flore, inside, after lunch

Three well-dressed women of forty having the sort of gossip for which golf-clubs are normally provided. Young man, sports coat, neat grey flannels, with handsome girl, slightly Moroccan, in large purple headscarf. Could be journalist. He reads paper assiduously. Girl perfectly happy. Girl with long hair loose down her back walks through café calmly examining everyone, walks out again. Terribly worried little man, propping his eyes open with black coffee, scribbling away beside a pile of books. Every now and then he gets stuck, and looks as if he is next for the firing-squad. Near us grey-haired man talks vigorously to beautiful faded woman, very *soignée*, with patient poodle. Actress? Small American girl, corn bob, tweed skirt, blue shirt, reading paper but alert for someone who doesn't turn up. At next table trio—two girls and a man. Second man comes up, embraces one of the girls, stays to flirt. Affectionate, old chum. Her friends protest lightly, but he stands his ground and soon they are all cracking away. Beautiful management of this operation is very French. Elegant businessman in French clothes reads *New York Herald* and lunches late over sandwich and coffee. Widow, very plainly dressed, sits by herself sipping red wine. No change of expression. As if stuffed. Visiting father and student son, both trying very hard to make their meeting a success, both finding conversation almost impossible. In its pathos this scene is





horribly English; one doesn't expect it here. Coffee, tomato-juice, beer, the odd whisky. No sign anywhere of Sartre or Simone de Beauvoir. Grey elderly man alone gazing sadly through his thick spectacles. Writer gathering material? Clerk seeing life? Think the latter. Whole beauty of café-life lies in speculation. Large exuberant woman addresses shrivelled man as if he were a public meeting. Waiter, short, with gentle intelligent face and none of the hard shell waiters grow, is Pascal, famous figure. Didn't serve Wilde with absinthe, but almost.

Deux Magots, terrace, after dinner.

This pavement on the corner by the church certainly the most interesting social viewpoint in all Paris. Every table packed. Little groups of students stand chatting, brightly lit by café. For the young of the Sorbonne and the Beaux Arts and all the other neighbouring schools this is the parish pump. All

look more or less out of *Les Tricheurs*. Most of the boys in variations of duffel-coat. High-necked sweaters, black shirts buttoned up without a tie; smarter ones in drainpipe trousers and pointed suède shoes, but many in jeans. Hair is flowing again; the male young of France have mercifully come through their Marlon Brando phase. Girls in short skirts or narrow trousers, suède jackets or corduroy, flat ballet-shoes. Some carry shopping baskets. All very friendly, very animated. Laughing groups form and dissolve, making way for others. Gipsy girl doing round of tables asks to read my hand. "*Ah, mais Monsieur, j'ai un bébé dans le sac!*" One of the twelve apostles walks past, magnificently dignified in beard that must be paradise for bird-watchers. With him, dragging along, little pudding of a woman, padded out with thick felt. *Clochard* in a ratcatcher's cap goes by, pushing green perambulator piled

high with copper saucepans. He seems strangely full of purpose. Grand young man with cigar and brief-case steps out of low two-seater to subject us all to microscopic scrutiny. Then he gets back, and drives off. Fair sprinkling of beards, in rich variety of topiary. Students and the bright young file in and out of café, stopping to chat with friends. Very natural and gay. Difficult to translate this scene to England, yet Chelsea and Cambridge not so very different. Chinese artist going round tables in one direction, cheerfully opening portfolio, while pretty girl student in jeans goes round the other way, unaffectedly offering her poems. No sale, but everyone seems satisfied. Beside me two sombre old men deep in conversation, leaning on their umbrellas, their whiskers flying as they ram home a point. Critics, no doubt, if they are not bankers weighing up the heavy franc.

The Menace of the Moor

By PENELOPE HUNT

AMONG summer visitors to Dartmoor an odd illusion prevails; they think that the convicts are dangerous and that the ponies are picturesque. We who live here all the year round know that the reverse is true. The convicts act nativity plays and paint murals; they scribble modern verse of a poignant nature on the walls of their cells; they are feckless dreamers unused to the stern rigours of country life outside their sheltering walls. Not for many years has an escaping convict so much as uttered a harsh word to anyone he encountered. He is pressed for time. It upsets his tight schedule if he takes ten minutes off to maltreat the local natives. As often as not he breaks not to try for a permanent getaway but to get himself demoted into a more congenial gang. All he asks is to be let in out of the weather, and to warm himself upon the cooker, while you make him a cup of cocoa, and your husband, with his full consent, rings up the prison for a conveyance to take him back.

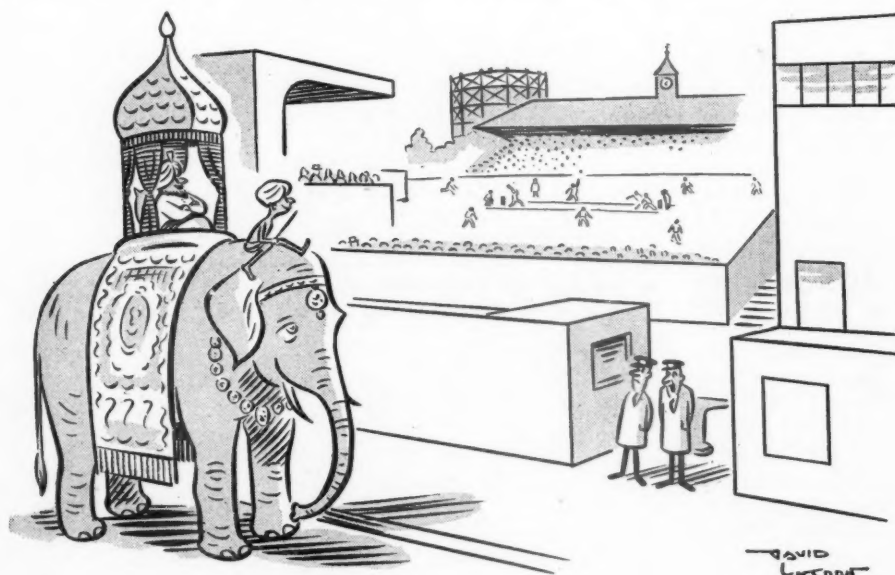
If there has to be something at the bottom of my garden I would far sooner it were convicts than ponies. Convicts do not spend the winter night walking

up and down and to and fro upon the asparagus bed, with their tiny little feet churning up the growth of years. Convicts do not swallow whole clumps of azaleas, nor do they with their tough teeth drag up a newly-planted camellia Adolf Andusson and, misliking the taste of its leaves, relinquish it to lie overnight on the lawn and die of frosted roots. Convicts, it is true, scale stone walls, but in the harsh months of spring ponies do this too, without the bother of making themselves ladders or ropes of knotted sheets. Ponies laugh at electric fences, trot happily across cattle grids, go over the spring corn like so many motor-mowers, and altogether cause those of us who farm or garden around the moor to think dark thoughts about introducing some quick-acting form of pony myxomatosis. The moor is heavily over-stocked with ponies, but owing to a law passed round about the time of Edward II, no one can do anything about this. The prison suffers this way too, but under Edward II the convicts would all have been bumped off, so perhaps there is truth in these rumours that reach us from time to time about human progress.

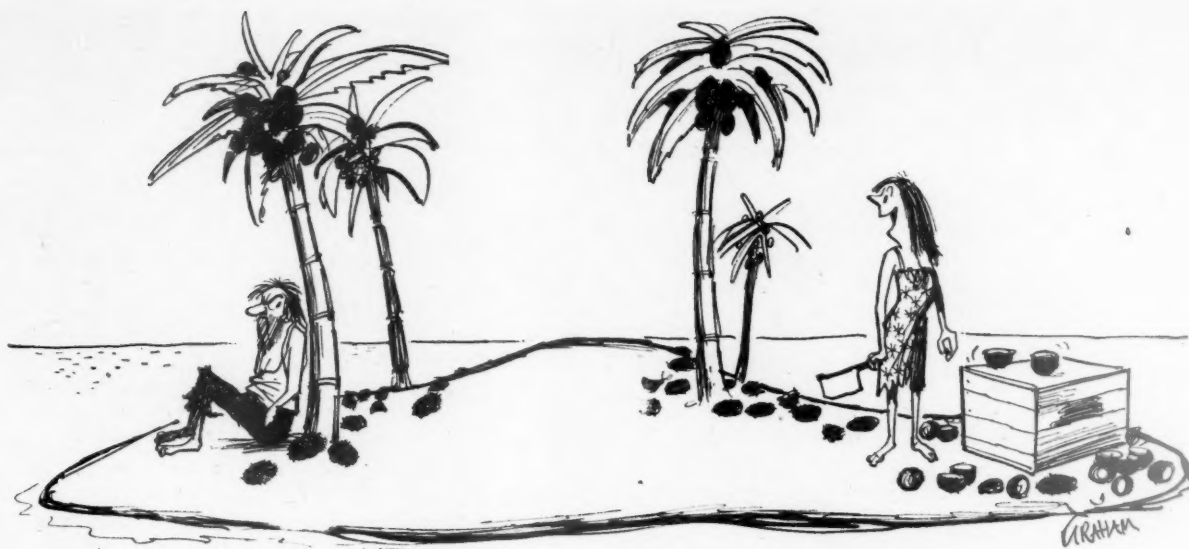
Our pony problem is, however, largely

solved for us by the big-hearted motor-ing public, but in a way that even the locals, hardened brutes though we are, do not really care about. Those tousled pony forelocks, those big dark trusting eyes, those tiny pattering feet, bring out the mother in many a single lady of independent means living in Torquay or Ilfracombe, and have a catastrophic effect upon summer visitors in motor-cars. "Feeding the ponies is dangerous to yourselves and to passing traffic" warns a notice at Yelverton on the western edge of the moor, but never was notice more blithely disregarded. No Dartmoor pony during July or August need trouble itself with dull stuff like grass, nourished as it is on a steady diet of sardine sandwiches, macaroons, stuffed tomatoes, choc-bars, fried fish, and spam. Kindness to animals is a very beautiful thing. If the motorists came every day during January, February and March, advanced fifty paces away from the roads and into the hinterland, and there deposited a large truss of hay, this would indeed be kind. As it is, their generous attentions are lethal.

Ponies have simple minds: roads are not for them places of terror, they are places where in June 1957 a motorist



"You'd have thought he'd be the sort to afford a ticket."



"Elevenes!"

gave them a chocolate éclair in a paper bag. They hang around night after night dreading a repetition of this event; their dead bodies strew the roadsides at dawn and cause many a pile-up: obstructive behaviour of this kind is rarely observable in convicts.

Every so often the ponies reveal themselves in their native colours, and a sour old stallion, indignant because junior has been given the last piece of Camembert, leans into the car and gives the offending motorist a bite on the shoulder which will scar him till death, or a little girl, brought up in some leafy suburb to love and trust all dumb, furred, and feathered folk, receives a kick at the base of the spine from some agitated mare whose foal she is fondling that will cripple her for life. No instance of a convict biting the shoulder of a Jaguar owner has ever been recorded and the number of them who regularly kick small girls could be counted on the fingers of one hand.

In Princetown itself the competition between our rival tourist attractions is very hot. Great numbers of motorists and coach-tourists gather here in August, on the chance of seeing the very warder who unlocked Dennis Stafford's cell that very morning. Jealous of this, the ponies crowd into Princetown in large numbers, and the main street becomes an impenetrable mass of people feeding bananas to ponies, people photographing people feeding bananas to ponies, people

photographing people photographing people feeding bananas to ponies. Outside the village, motorists park their cars, spread their rugs and settle down to a happy picnic lunch with their binoculars focused on the rear elevation of a convict hoeing potatoes a mile and a half away. This behaviour gets right under the skin of any self-respecting Dartmoor pony, and he stands tenaciously on the edge of the rug between the motorists and the view of the convict and has to be placated with pork pies and slices of tinned pineapple.

Feeding the convicts is compulsory, although executed at disappointingly long range via the Inland Revenue.

Some years ago there was a fog on the day of the Princetown gymkhana. Arriving at the place where the road met the moor, we found it black with policemen. A friend among them told us that three razor boys were out. Our three children, having a pony to get shod, had left earlier by another route and were taking a short cut across the open moor. Ordinarily, one would feel at least a passing pang to think of one's three adolescent children alone on a wide wide moor with three razor boys bent on winning through to the city lights. They were, we learnt, lightly built types. They had but to knock the three children on the head and could then ride secure across rural England impenetrably disguised under crash caps and behind Pony Club ties. But the

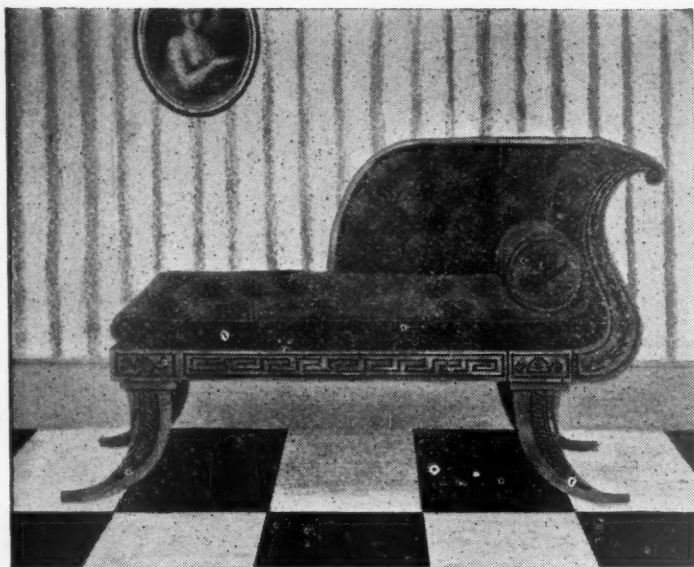
convicts had now been out of the prison for six hours of steady rain; and having previously all led sheltered lives in the Seven Sisters Road would not by now have enough spirit left in them to swat a fly.

The gymkhana, which was conducted in a fog through which it was impossible to see from one side of the ring to the other, pursued the normal course of seven hours of chill and boredom lit by twenty minutes of tearing excitement, all present being soaked to the skin by the end of the first half-hour. On our return home (the children arriving an hour later unmenaced by razors en route) we found that seven ponies had wriggled through or under a four-strand barbed wire fence and eaten what should have been a whole winter's supply of vegetables. The convicts meanwhile, exhausted by the wind and the general angst of country life, gave themselves up early next morning as good as pussy.

Of late a splendid fellow has been buying up quantities of Dartmoor ponies and shipping them to Canada. Good luck to him, unless he arouses the cupidity latent in all farmers and we start breeding the little beasts. But Canada is a great big country; it can take it. All the same, it was Australia that skimmed, about a hundred and fifty years ago, the cream of the export drive.

Short Story

"FOR SALE.—12 bore shotgun, spade and wedding ring."—*The Times*



1



2

Collectors' Corner

by Smilby

THIS year's Antique Dealers' Fair at Grosvenor House once again presents a magnificent collection of antiques of all kinds. But inevitably some rarer pieces are not represented, and it is to these that I propose to devote this week's Corner. The rare and beautifully proportioned chaise-courte of satinwood, inlaid and partly gilt (Fig. 1) is a masterpiece of early nineteenth century furniture. This type of chair had a brief vogue during the Regency when it was popular with ladies, who, whilst disapproving of the practice of total languour, nevertheless felt that social conformity demanded a certain amount of relaxation. This particular example is one of a pair produced by the workshop of Josiah Treddle to the order of Mrs. Pallet.

An unusual piece is the tobacco-mill (Fig. 2), the property of Sir James Perryman. This has been in the possession of the Perryman family since 1594 when it was made for Sir Rufus Perryman, first baronet and privateer. It bears his arms, the date and a carved inscription round the spindle which reads "He who wolde wishe to smoke in peace, must turne mee round to gaine relief."

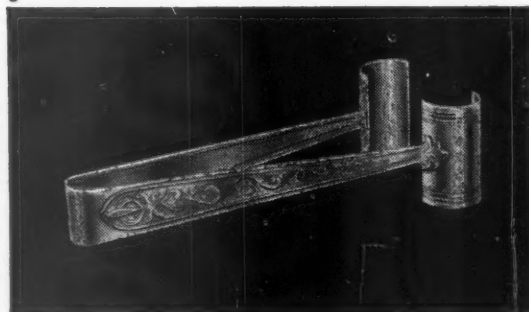
Another rare piece is the pair of banana tongs (Fig. 3). Of finely chased silver and exceptional quality, they are a superb example of the work of the famous Flemish emigré silversmith Pieter Luysmann (1761-1829).

These are reputed to have been made to the order of Beau Brummell whose comment on the banana is too well known to be repeated here. Some authentication of this commission can be found in the diary of Timothy Foote who wrote on May 15th, 1808—"... went to Luysmann's with Beau. He did order a dam'd fine pair of tongs."

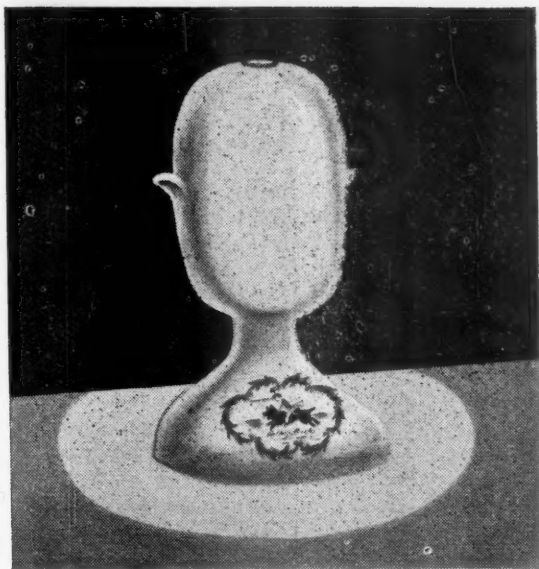
Our native fellow-feeling for dumb animals is amply shown by armour made for dogs. The dog-chanfron (?) illustrated (Fig. 4) was

1. Chaise-courte of very fine quality. Inlaid satinwood, beautifully marked, of good colour and high patina.
2. Late Elizabethan Tobacco-mill, richly carved in oak, bearing the Perryman arms and the date 1594.
3. A rare pair of silver banana tongs with the London hall-mark for 1808. Weight 4 oz. 18 dwts.
4. A chanfron (?) made for the dog of Sir Walter Roland at Greenwich. c. 1512. The escutcheon bears the Roland arms.

3

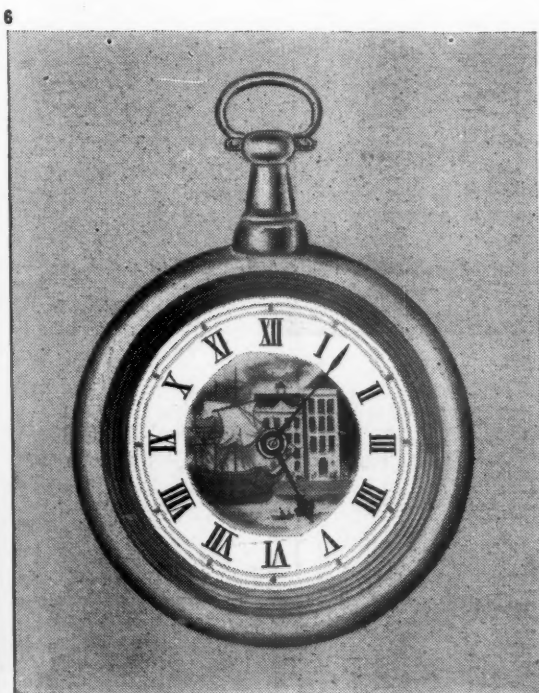


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5. A fascinating late-eighteenth century stoneware Wig-warmer which commemorates an unusual ride.
6. Naval officer's grogwatch by William Grove of London. The dial is enamelled, the centre depicting a quayside scene.
7. A finely carved ivory Sedan-whip (detail) recently purchased by Doctor Clayton. Mid-eighteenth century.
8. A richly embroidered snuffet recently found. The fillings are of particular note. Early seventeenth century (detail).



6

part of a suit made about 1512 for the dog of Sir Walter Roland. The surface is embossed with converging flutes.

An eighteenth-century aid to comfort was the wig-warmer, and this splendid example (Fig. 5) is especially interesting in that it commemorates the epic feat of Major Merriweather who rode the one hundred and three miles from London to Bath on his pig Charlotte to win a wager of one hundred guineas.

That wig-warmers did more than save the pate unnecessary shocks is shown by the following advertisement from the *Morning Chronicle* for June 28 1776—"Charles Davenport at No. 8 King Street, Seven Dials, begs leave to acquaint Gentlemen of his most excellent Wig-warmers—the Practical Scheme for Comfort and Good Health as can be attested by several of the Nobility. The use of which gives Protection against the Gout, Rheumatism, Obstruction of the Liver and Twisting of the Guts."

The Naval Grogwatch (Fig. 6), by William Grove of London is of particular note as it is one of the few by this celebrated maker to survive the Napoleonic Wars. It has an enamelled dial, the centre depicting a quayside scene allowing a bold margin for numerals.

It was the custom of naval officers at that time to fortify themselves, much against orders, with a sip of grog while on duty in cold weather. To avoid detection the spirit was concealed in the hollow back of the watch which was filled by way of the bow pendant which unscrewed. It is believed that the first grogwatch was made for an officer serving under Lord Gaither who, a teetotaler himself, disliked other men drinking and forbade it at sea.

A fine example of the little-known Sedan-whip or Fettler is this one (Fig. 7) recently purchased by Dr. Clayton of Penningfold. The handle is of ivory, beautifully carved and surmounted by the figure of a lion. The Fettler was a sharp reminder to absent-minded chairmen not to take the long way round.

A well preserved example of an embroidered Jacobean Snuffet (detail Fig. 8) was found in a priest's-hole recently uncovered in Benskin Priory. This snuffet, now in the possession of Robert Hicks, Esq., is particularly interesting in that it is one of the few examples where the skimp is centrally placed.

7



8



The Age of the Common State

By VERONA HOWARTH



"BUT are you familiar with the Resolution?" said the secretary of the Committee. I was not. He handed me a very neat typewritten copy. "You read it and you will see what we are up against."

I took it eagerly. I like treaties. Dignified. They begin *Whereas* and are made by *High Contracting Parties*. *Desirous*, these graciously proclaim, and state a noble aim.

Horse-trading there may be, but what panache: *furnish all aid and succour . . . do hereby cede . . . ces armées de la terre, de la mer, et de l'air . . . Done in the Tamil, Telugu and French languages. The French text shall prevail.*

Oh, the lustre of the luminaries signing for the *Signatories*! Surnames standing alone for Peers of the British Realm, sonorous tongue-twisting foreigners oozing Excellency. *Plenipotentiaries* to a man.

I was forgetting. The Concert is over. The Powers have dwindled to Great Powers, are paper-backed as the Big Four. They are just Ordinary Plain States, making resolutions.

So *The General Assembly, considering*—what else would it do?—*Recalling*—the public memory is so short—*Invites*—polite enough, but you have to pitch it a bit stronger—ah, yes—*Requests . . .*

Now rapidly *Bearing in Mind the main economic objectives, and Aware of the lack of balance, Recognizing active co-operation*—where did they learn to recognize that? *URGES . . .*

Who do they think they are, eh? Stay, they know it—*Expresses the hope*—ha, coming down a peg—*refrain from the use of trade practices generally considered unfair*—h'm, what a hope! *APPEALS . . .*

Now I ask you, the other extreme. Crawling, positively crawling. You know what happens to poor fish of prefects who appeal. . . . But steady on, they're getting their second wind.

Reaffirming . . . Taking note of . . . Confident that such arrangements contribute . . . Increasingly Conscious—can that be what they really mean?

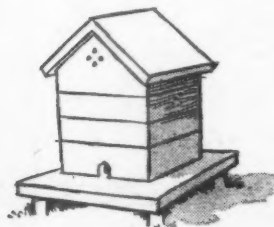
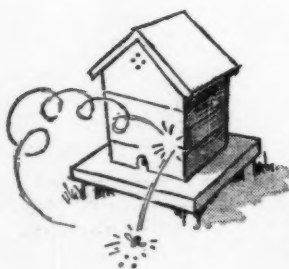
Welcoming the Fact . . . Stressing the Need . . . Further Requests . . .

"You see what I mean," said the secretary. "It's pretty strong, isn't it? We tried to get it watered down, it will make a big impression on the uncommitted countries. The delegation thought at one point, get it through, leaving at midnight, the tungsten lobby, the Afro-Asian bloc, Dag, what do you think?"

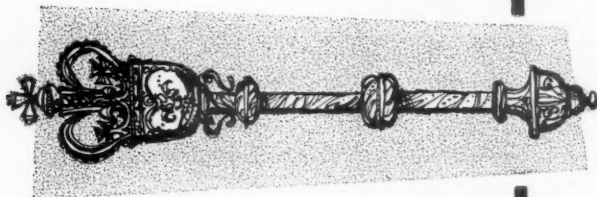
I thought "*We, Lord of the Isles, Emperor of the French, His Most Christian Majesty, Sword of Islam, Defender of the Faith, King of Kings, Shadow of God Upon Earth, Master of the Persian Dawn, to Our Cousin, Greeting.*"

I thought "*To these our loyal and loving subjects.*"

But I did not say so. All I said was "Put the ball back into their court, old man."



Essence



of Parliament

THE week started off with Sir Frank Medlicott wanting the Minister of Labour to bring in legislation to prohibit tips in hotels and substitute a service charge instead. There is a great deal to be said against the system of tipping—a great deal to be said for it that a service charge is a healthier and more dignified arrangement. But it is hard to see how the abolition of tipping could be enforced by Act of Parliament. What are we to do to the rich man who, in order to get favoured service, gives an extra tip on top of the service charge? If one free citizen sees fit to hand over a coin to another free citizen who has carried his bag, are we to send him to prison for doing so? There may be a disease, but the remedy seems worse than it.

It is perhaps the same with the general tedium of Parliament. The complaint has often been made—not least in this column—that Parliamentary debates are sometimes very dull. The defender of Parliament might retort by asking whether it is the business of Parliament to be amusing. Parliament is primarily a place of legislation rather than a place of entertainment. Arguments about the rates of pension or of contributions are not likely in themselves to be sidesplitting. But that does not say that they are not important. The House of Commons has had rather a good week of it this week on the new Insurance Bill, and the exchanges have been at a tolerably high level. Mr. Crossman was able to find an opportunity to introduce a bit of general knockabout. Mr. Wade

made quite a good liberal joke about wanting to change the title of the bill to the Socialist Party's Pensions Enabling Bill. Mr. Houghton with his passion for statistics and Mr. Boyd-Carpenter with his passion for exposition enjoyed themselves. Sir Keith Joseph, as he always does on these subjects, batted as if he was Bradman and there was no hope in the world of ever bowling him out. But in general the finer points about pensions arguments can only be appreciated by those rare beings who can carry all these multifarious statistics in their heads, and such are not numerous in the Press Gallery or elsewhere.

If Parliament was as it was in the eighteenth century, when profane constituents were not allowed to read any account of its debates, then there might be no need to sauce the dish. As it is, Parliament, just like a schoolboy's class which in so many ways it resembles, needs from time to time—not too often, but from time to time—to be given its light relief. It is Scotland which has certainly provided the House of Commons with its two leading post-war jesters. The first was Sir William Darling, prince of men but now no longer, alas, at Westminster. The second is Mr. Emrys Hughes. What a calamity it would be if an electoral accident should deprive Westminster of his oratory! His case for nationalizing *The Times* was a good case, based, as a satirist's case should be, on arguments of which we could not be quite certain whether he wished us to take them seriously or not. He told us that Sir

Mr. J. Boyd-Carpenter



Mr. D. Houghton

Winston Churchill had in 1915 supported the nationalization of *The Times*, and when a minute or two afterwards Sir Winston, amid cheers and laughter, came into the Chamber Mr. Emrys Hughes confidently invoked his support. Mr. Henderson Stewart, sitting next to Sir Winston, attempted to explain to him what it was all about, but he did not give the impression that he was meeting with much success. Disdaining reliance on the notorious Selwyn Lloyd case, Mr. Hughes produced other instances where *The Times*, carrying with it its reputation of a semi-official organ, has done serious harm by failing to print reliable news. A speech of extreme laudation of the Soviet Union, allegedly made at the British Embassy by Mr. Macmillan during his recent visit, had not, he complained, been reported in *The Times*. The recent meeting about nuclear disarmament at the Albert Hall had not been reported, while space had been found for a Fascist meeting in Trafalgar Square. *The Times'* excuse, said Mr. Hughes, was that "Christianity is not news." My own sympathies are all with Mr. Hughes' protest against the failure to report this meeting, but I doubt if Mr. Hughes' summary of *The Times'* excuse for not reporting it was quite fair. However that may be, it was all excellent fun, and Mr. Hughes' argument that if a paper was to enjoy a reputation for being a semi-official organ it might as well be official and therefore reliable—like, he argued mischievously, the B.B.C.—had, however improbable of adoption this actual remedy, nevertheless a certain cogency. It all ended in a riot of fun with his promise to be conciliatory in detail on committee stage, and when he asked for leave to bring in the bill there was a roar of Aye. Only Sir John Crowder seemed to be muttering a *sotto-voce* No and he did not persist in his opposition. Mr. Hughes ended with a final crescendo of triumph. A private member, when given leave to bring in a bill, has to announce to the Speaker the names of some supporting members who will help him to "bring in and prepare the bill." In response to the Speaker's request Mr. Hughes, amid further roars of laughter, answered "Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Butler." He had enlisted the support of the two Socialist members of that name.

— PERCY SOMERSET

Toby Competitions

No. 73—A Few Well-chosen Words

DRAFT a communiqué for publication at the close of the Foreign Ministers' conference at Geneva in the local newspaper idiom, which customarily finds all for the best in the best possible world. Limit: 120 words.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries by first post on Friday, June 26, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 73, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 70 (The Best Policy)

Competitors were required to submit the circumstances of an unusual insurance claim. Although British insurance companies have a very high reputation for fairness, they would have to be very generous to allow many of the entries. The winning entry is one of several based on death during an operation and subsequent restoration to life. It was the entry of:

S. A. RIDGE
7 CHRISTCHURCH ROAD
SIDCUP, KENT

who thinks that a newspaper report will be accepted as evidence of his claim:

I claim payment under the terms of my policy No. DE/AT/0001/H of the sum due and payable on my death which took place in —

General Hospital when my heart stopped beating whilst undergoing an operation for the removal of a birthmark.

Confirmation of my death is to be found in the — *Post* (cutting enclosed) under the heading, "Dead' patient Restored to Life."

In order to avoid confusion between my former existence with, and my present one without, a birthmark, and as an indication of my second life, I subscribe myself,

Yours in grateful anticipation,

J. LUCKY II

P.S.—Please send proposal form for a new policy with your remittance.

Book tokens are awarded for the following unusual claims:

I wish to claim under my comprehensive personal accident policy. On Tuesday 8th inst. whilst sentence of execution was being carried out on myself, the rope broke and I fell heavily some 10 feet, sustaining a nasty fracture of my right leg below the knee.

As a result I am informed I shall be permanently crippled. My sentence has been reduced to life imprisonment so I wish to claim for pain and suffering and future disablement.—*Dr. Leopold Goldman, 2 Newborough Road, Shirley, Birmingham*

Under instruction from a veterinary surgeon my team of twenty performing fleas, insured for £500 with your company, were allowed free range on one of the circus poodles for one day a week. A new kennel-man employed by the circus was not informed of this practice and bathed all the dogs in a strong insecticide solution resulting in the tragic and untimely death of nineteen of the fleas. The sole survivor, Horatio, I eventually found sheltering at the tip of the dog's tail in a state of semi-coma.

In terms of my policy 19/20ths of £500 are claimed for death, disablement and loss of employment.—*R. W. Brocne, 11 Danube Street, Edinburgh, 4*

I took all reasonable precautions. I had with me as usual my oilskins, umbrella and wellington boots, also panama hat and sunglasses; police-whistle, bulletproof vest and fog-lights had not been forgotten; comb, handkerchief and ticket-holder were all carefully padlocked to my person. I was on the look-out for descending bricks as well as gutter-hugging juggernauts. A herd of bullocks would have found me ready. But I, rather stupidly, did not foresee a rabid foam-flecked Malay popping suddenly, with rolling eyes and bloodstained kris between his teeth, up out of a coal-hole at my feet. Inadvertently I stepped aside and was pecked on the ear by a pet-shop canary.—*Miss Gloria Prince, 87 Green Lane, Addlestone, Surrey*

I hereby submit a claim under our Comprehensive Policy—Accidents to Teachers in the Course of their Employment. Mr. Gleam, an English master, when giving a lesson on metaphors, explained that they still bore their literal meanings as well. After illustration he asked for further examples.

Smith Minor volunteered that he had seen him taking the Science mistress for a ride the previous evening, but was not sure in which category this expression came. Mr. Gleam bit his lip. I am advised (see accompanying medical evidence) that he will have a slight but permanent facial disfigurement, and claim accordingly.—*R. R. Zanker, 37 Overleigh Road, Chester*

A golfer sliced his drive and the ball flew off the course into a neighbouring hen-house. The owner of the chickens, a short-sighted professor, picked up the golf ball and, mistaking it for an egg, boiled it for his breakfast. Making a vain attempt to crack the supposed egg, he dislocated his wrist, and on learning that he had been trying to take the top off a golf ball sought to obtain damages from the golf club through its insurance company. He was told that if he had attempted to take the top off his supposed egg in a civilized manner, with a knife instead of using a spoon, the accident would never have happened.—*G. F. Blundell, Littlewood, East Malling, Kent*

My chauffeur, driving my car north, gained on a transporter vehicle occupying fully half the width of the road which at that point was very undulating in character. Due to this undulation and a slight miscalculation in relative speeds, my chauffeur collided with a long tube projecting from the transporter, impaling my car, which, as the transporter topped a rise, remained suspended, swinging pendulum-wise. It remained in this position until the transporter pulled in to a lay-by and passing traffic drew the driver's attention to our predicament. I claim for renewal of windscreen, rear window, and a white shirt which the transporter's driver maintains he had hanging at the extremity of the tube.—*J. F. Pentland, 32 Montpelier Park, Edinburgh 10*

Bentley's Gallery



SYDNEY BERNSTEIN

... speaking of admiration, Sydney Bernstein
Certainly earns mine.
No one has tried harder
To raise the level of TV than the Czar of Granada.

In the



City

A Flutter in Rubber

FOR those who can afford to take a risk, or rather two risks, a flutter in rubber to-day would not come amiss—and here is why.

It is an appropriately tough and resilient industry. No chapter in the long history of Britain's overseas investments is more typical of the admixture of men and money of which these investments are made than that of the Malayan rubber industry.

In the early days of the war, when Britain was scraping the barrel to provide the hard cash with which to pay for munitions and other essentials from the United States (it was in pre-Lend-Lease days) Washington suggested at one time that in order to produce the necessary dollars Britain should mobilize and sell its Malayan tin and rubber investments. The late Lord Keynes, who was at the Treasury at the time, told the Americans with some heat that these investments represented living personal enterprises and not an automatic flow of dividends. If, he wrote, the Americans take over the dividends they will have to take over the enterprises with responsibility for the territories; otherwise the flow of production will dry up.

These echoes of a battle fought for the retention of British ownership of these companies (and what a pointless battle it came to appear two years later when the Japanese overran Malaya) are brought to mind by the recent Golden Jubilee of one of the greatest of these rubber companies, the United Sua Betong. This company provides the epitome of the marriage of men and capital which produced the living organisms that constitute the main part of Britain's overseas investments.

Its story is that of rubber itself and of Malaya. Rubber was worth a mouth-watering 7s. 1d. per pound when the company was formed in 1909. Some twenty years later the commodity was

to touch a bankrupting 1½d. a pound. Now it is a more reasonable and healthy 2s. 4d. a pound, a price at which the efficient estate pays its way and the natural product can compete against the synthetic.

It is also a history studded by political adventures—the Japanese invasion in the last war, the long period of banditry euphemistically called “the emergency” from which Malaya and its industries are only now emerging.

Any industry that has withstood these economic and political shocks as successfully as Malayan rubber is worth serious consideration. There are two risks—the political and the synthetic. Of both it can be said they are with us everywhere and at all times. Here at home the political risk will be creeping up upon us before long. Even in the most synthetic of industries there is

In the



Country

AN insurance clerk from Liverpool who wants to turn farmer writes and asks me if I think he can earn his living from the land. I suppose I ought to know the answer: I have been a farmer now for twenty-five years. But I don't. So much depends on what he means by a living. If this clerk intends to keep office hours on his smallholding he'll find himself bankrupt; if he doesn't he'll find himself exhausted. An average small farmer has to put in a twelve-hour shift, and there's little point in charging himself overtime.

But assuming he takes the plunge and finds somebody to take the mortgage; what, he asks, would be his most profitable line? As a dairy farmer I can assure him that cows pay enormous profits—theoretically. On paper a milking cow should pay her cost back in one year and thereafter yield something like ninepence a gallon over and above costs. But in practice it is another story. Last year (and my farm is not particularly neurotic) one of my best cows committed suicide by jumping over the cliff—no doubt there was

always the risk of new products putting the old out of business. There are certain qualities about natural rubber which, given a reasonable price, will ensure that it is required for as long as the eye can reach, as far as the motor-car and the lorry can run.

Many investors are now holding lush paper profits on industrial shares. They can afford the risk involved in the inevitably more speculative investment in primary commodities. They will be well paid for running that risk in the rubber market. Many Malayan rubber shares offer yields of between 8 and 15 per cent, in most cases well covered. Among them the shares of United Sua Betong, which on their 50-per-cent dividend yield about 11 per cent, are a very fair risk. The company have a record and a management that entitle them to respect. — LOMBARD LANE

* * *

a gadfly after her; another broke her hip as she slipped on a concrete gutter coming in late from a party; and a third died, without complaint, of milk fever. All that in one season represented a loss of about £400, and it takes a lot of ninepences to put that in the bank again.

Sheep pay if you don't get fluke. We do get fluke.

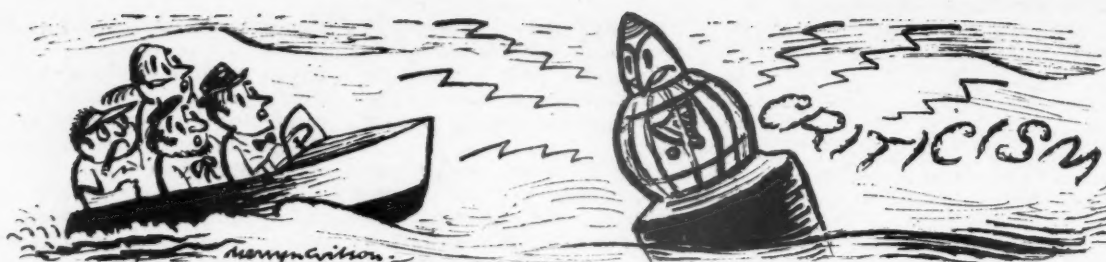
Pigs are profitable if you are a Dane. Here you have to fatten two hundred baconers a year to pay the wages of the pigman. You're lucky if you clear £4 profit per pig.

At the moment there's money in beef. Indeed I'm surprised myself to see how much. I sent five old dowager cows over ten years old to be graded last week, together with a few calves under a week old, and received nearly £300 for them. Which proves that steak's at a premium and that there are few epicures.

As for crops, corn growing is a dead loss for the small man. Machinery is too expensive. Spuds can ruin you unless you live in Lincolnshire. Horticulture is very profitable—to green-grocers. Fruit growing: lucrative to birds. Though I believe there's money in blackcurrants.

With these facts before you, you may ask why farmers farm. I suppose we do it for exercise and believe it profitable because we don't keep accounts. Some of us take in visitors; others take in themselves. And as my family says, it keeps me out of mischief.

— RONALD DUNCAN



BOOKING OFFICE

Testament of Sacheverell

Journey to the Ends of Time. Volume 1—
Lost in the Dark Wood. Sacheverell
Sitwell. Cassell, 35/-

MR. SITWELL tells us in a Note of Explanation that his long, new work, *Journey to the Ends of Time*, was inspired by a theme for a composition conceived, but never executed, by Berlioz. In it a mock Day of Judgment staged by an antichrist is interrupted by the real one.

The reader who anticipates some classically constructed drama should here be told that the theme contributes no more than the flimsiest framework to what is, in fact, a survey, as from the vantage point of death, of "the knowledge and experience of a lifetime projected into the form of fantasies of the mind and soul." So far as one can judge from this first volume, the work

takes no particular form, but later volumes may disprove this.

Mr. Sitwell has read and travelled widely in a state, it seems, of wonder at the mystery, beauty and horror of the world. He reviews his impressions philosophically and with imaginative insight, contemplating against the spectacle of endless rebirth and repetition "the appalling predicament of death."

The book opens with early memories, dream-like and wavering, for the newly dead "have a little time, while the body is warm, to collect their belongings." The soul then joins a great rally of souls setting out from the city of life. This scene has all the vivacity and jollity that precedes an excursion, but suddenly the author finds himself alone in the desert, on the track of Bidon-5.

Inevitably, when the work of an established writer covers so much ground, some of it is old ground. With a nostalgia for early days spent searching for life among the shabby books in public libraries I came upon the skull racks of Tenochtitlán and the white ibises perched like flowers in a tree near Fez. As I read of Bidon-5, the desert point where a solitary inhabitant tends a beacon "three hundred miles from nowhere," it occurred to me what vistas Mr. Sitwell's "wonder books" must, over the years, have opened to the young and inexperienced.

The desert is a purgatory haunted by the author's own fantasies. Whether he contemplates the Book of the Dead, travels in the Ship of Fools, gazes into the pit or attends the inquisition, there is a sense of the confusion of a soul launched into eternity with nothing but memory to which to cling.

We read of the bound that once ran from under a sleeping-car with something "appalling and indescribable" in its mouth; of the Benin women crucified in trees; of the natives of Northern Australia with their smudged, inhuman features like the "faces" of bats; and of every sort of monster. The exhumation of a suicide is vividly described. We pass through a painful vision of the women of Belsen, to a bedroom scene in

the house of the arch-hypocrite Paterson who poisoned his wife and mother-in-law with antimony. The author excels in these descriptive passages to which he gives both a quality of nightmare and stark reality, but there are times, as in the over-long telling of the murder of the "little Savoyard," when one feels that the bare bones of such a story, recorded in the Newgate Calendar or the Annual Register, might by their very sparseness strike more chill.

The miseries outnumber the splendours here, but there is a compensating strain of poetry. I followed with particular pleasure the blue motif—blue eucalyptus glades, horses among dark-blue irises, the "blue throat of a gentian"—which recurs throughout the composition.

This is a memorable first volume of what will almost certainly prove to be the author's major work.

— OLIVIA MANNING

POETS' CORNER



15. R. S. THOMAS

NEW NOVELS

- Epitaph for an Enemy.** George Barr. Hutchinson, 15/-
The Notion of Sin. Robert McLaughlin. Michael Joseph, 15/-
The Comrade. Cesare Pavese. Translated by W. J. Strachan. Peter Owen, 15/-
The Rivers of Babylon. Robert Liddell. Cape, 16/-

The kind of novel where the characters wander about and talk to people and the kind of novel which forms a single transaction have probably long been labelled by some theorist of fiction. Examples are, perhaps, *The Satyricon* and *The Iliad*. The first class tend to be decadent, enjoyable and obliquely illuminating, the second to be nearer to the central experiences of life.

In *Epitaph for an Enemy* an American sergeant is detailed to evacuate the population of a Normandy hamlet just after the landings. As they trail up and down the road, always being turned back, their narrow jealousies, their utter lack of concern for the larger events around them and their bickering over who had collaborated with the German Commandant infuriate the American, already harassed by his responsibility for their safety. However, he gradually comes to see them as individuals and, piecing

together their recollections of the German Commandant, recognizes him as a good man. The attempt to cover so wide a field as patriotism, war, love and religion within so closely limited an episode does not quite come off. Some of the reflective passages interrupt the story rather than heighten it. It is not quite another *A Walk in the Sun*, but it can properly be mentioned in the same breath.

The Notion of Sin watches marriages among American advertising people break up and people lose jobs. There is plenty of drink and there are lots of parties. It sounds in this unfair summary a rather old-fashioned novel; but it is much better than it sounds. The people live, the talk is varied and entertaining, the title is relevant and out of the casual swirl of encounters, many of which are very funny, quite a complex pattern emerges. How odd it is that the ad-man has replaced the curate as the mixed-up hero in novels.

The Times Literary Supplement has called Pavese "incontrovertibly the greatest 'European' writer produced by Italy," and *The Comrade* could fill an article by itself. The narrator is a guitar-playing layabout from Turin: the period is the Spanish Civil War. He is kept by the women of his family who have a shop, and spends most of his time drifting from party to party and making love with a girl who becomes the mistress of a theatrical magnate. Then he moves to Rome, where he is wildly excited by the differences from life in Turin; he finds a new girl, becomes half-involved with conspirators against the régime and is imprisoned and released on condition he returns home. The narrative wanders along and we follow Pablo as he eagerly trots after experience, only half understanding what is happening in the society round him. At first the effect is confusing and aimless; then its truth to life, especially to life in a Mediterranean country, begins to make its impact.

The Rivers of Babylon is not just another novel about teaching in an Egyptian University. It is full of good jokes and that donnish, sophisticated humour that wears so well. It is both riotously rude to Egypt and clear-eyed affectionate; one recurrent theme is the impossibility of an Egyptian *A Passage to India*. The lotus-eating ends with the dismissal of the British teachers and the riots. Religion, scholarship, tea-table gossip, eccentrics, funny students and apt quotations, they are all here again. But this is better than most books in the genre because it is continuously aware of historical process and of the falsities produced by guilt-feelings in an ex-colonial power. With all his cold eye for the comedy of Britain overseas, Mr. Liddell is leading the much needed counter-offensive on behalf of Western values. He recognizes that Britain's final duty towards the succession states is to criticize.

— R. G. G. PRICE



[A Midsummer Night's Dream

Bottom—CHARLES LAUGHTON

AT THE PLAY

A Midsummer Night's Dream

(STRATFORD-UPON-AVON)

Farewell, Farewell, Eugene (GARRICK)

I DON'T suppose there has ever been a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that did not arouse controversy, and Peter Hall's decision to set the play in an Elizabethan country house, with the stage strewn with rushes and a marvellously eerie forest appearing now and then behind the staircase, will obviously not please everybody. I found the conception fresh and charming.

More eyebrows will be raised, however, at the notion of characterizing the lovers as knockabout comics. Energetically played by Priscilla Morgan (Hermia), Albert Finney (Lysander), Vanessa Redgrave (Helena) and Edward de Souza (Demetrius), this talkative quartet romps through the woodland scenes with rare gusto—shedding poetry right and left and unforgivably, but bringing life to passages which have often seemed to me a trifle tedious. Partly as a result of this unorthodox treatment Quince's gormless Thespians emerge not as rough comics but as decent, sensible men going about their serious business while their betters occupy themselves in slapstick foolery. The truth is, they are not nearly so funny as the lovers, or as Ian Holm's sophisticated Puck. Mr. Hall has even got some

cheap laughs from Oberon (Robert Hardy) and Titania (Mary Ure). By contrast the rude mechanicals are a fairly glum lot, and Charles Laughton is allowed to make surprisingly little of Bottom. But nobody, I think, will quarrel with the fairies. These agile, diminutive sprites, played by boys and girls in gossamer-hung Elizabethan uniforms, dart and twitter and squeak in the most enchanting and enchanted way. No wood was ever more delightfully haunted.

Rodney Ackland's usually assured touch has deserted him in his adaptation of a play by John Vari called *Farewell, Farewell, Eugene*. This is a very light work, set in the lodgings of Minerva and Florence, daughters of a vicar now deceased. Minerva (Margaret Rutherford) is filled with the joy and wonder of life, but her buoyant spirit is kept constantly in check by the stern, forbidding influence of Florence (Peggie Mount), who finds it necessary to command the Almighty every ten minutes or so to forgive Minerva's wickedness—for Minerva drinks pale ale and flits blunderingly from one folly to another like an enormous flibbertigibbet.

Around these undoubtedly promising characters a flimsy little tale has been invented, involving an abandoned infant, a tremulous niece in her thirties dithering on the brink of marriage, her stage



Jerry Kingsley—FREDRIC MARCH

Betty Preisser—KIM NOVAK

Middle of the Night

Irishman of a suitor, and a ne'er-do-well nephew (Eugene) in darkest Africa. But the story is thin and unsatisfying, and the burden of the evening falls on the shoulders of Miss Rutherford. She makes of Minerva a creature of monstrously eccentric humour, tripping and stumbling and curtsying about the stage, warbling snatches of opera—and always convincing us that, however alarmingly close to the outer edge of sanity, Minerva is a real person. Miss Rutherford plays from the heart: her every extravagance of technique is made to seem inevitable for the portrayal of the character. Indeed she does not quite portray—she lives and breathes.

I felt that Peggie Mount was miscast here. She does not seem at home with gentility. She also tends to bawl all her good lines, as though continually embroiled in the flurry of a noisy farce. Miss Avril Elgar accurately characterized the niece, but fell rather flat in her weakly written drunk scene. In the smaller parts there were flagrant examples of inexperienced playing. I do not feel that the West End should be used as a training ground for actors.

—ALEX ATKINSON

AT THE PICTURES

Middle of the Night
The Diary of Anne Frank

I'M tempted to begin by explaining at length—at length, because I know it won't sink in otherwise, against the arts of publicity and most people's wish not to show any disagreement with

what they are told everybody else is thinking—why *The Diary of Anne Frank* seemed to me an over-stuffed, pretentious bore. But it would be better to use most of this space on a real film, something that anybody who is at all observant and sympathetically interested in people, and certainly anybody interested in film-making, must find much more enjoyable: *Middle of the Night* (Director: Delbert Mann).

Here once again we have the middle-aged-man-and-young-girl situation I mentioned the other week, but this is as far as possible from being a formula piece. The writer (Paddy Chayefsky) and director of *Marty* and *The Bachelor Party* here present another set of credible individuals in credible and interesting circumstances, different people and different circumstances from those we have seen before. The man (Fredric March) is a widower in his fifties; the girl (Kim Novak) is a secretary at his office, recently divorced but younger than his daughter. They develop a love for each other, though each is perpetually haunted by misgivings about it, and the families of each (her mother and sisters, his daughter and sister-in-law) try ever more angrily to argue them out of it. Various other influences pull at them: she meets her ex-husband again and is briefly attracted, he sees his business partner, an older man unhappily married, collapse into misery.

All these things make the framework of incident and carry one's interest ahead; the anxious, impeded progress of the affair is beautifully shown. But what

keeps the piece continually alive is the variety of convincing, amusing and entertaining character, excellently played, and the writing and direction, the sheer skill with which the story is told in picture, dialogue and sound. I never subscribed to—or understood—that convention of dismissing Kim Novak as a poor actress, and I think anyone must admit that here she gives a most sensitive and touching performance. Mr. March is first-rate, and there are numbers of good small-part people, including Glenda Farrell as the girl's outraged mother and Albert Dekker as the unhappy partner. There are many brilliantly handled group scenes, from the uneasy family supper to the lively office party.

It comes down in the end, as I suggest, to the question of whether you are sympathetically interested in people, and in what you see and hear in ordinary life. A piece of fiction as well done as this is not only entertaining and enjoyable; it has a positive value, because it freshens your vision of everyday life and gives you more interest and pleasure in living.

So we come to *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Director: George Stevens), the fundamental trouble with which is that the characters cannot be anything but obvious and shallow, because the only basis for them is the view of a very young girl. Moreover there is a radical conflict between the very medium of the film and an enclosed, claustrophobic story such as this, concerned entirely with a little group of people hiding for years from the Nazis in an Amsterdam attic. The film lasts for nearly three hours—and in CinemaScope, for goodness' sake—and we hear the girl's naive philosophizing, with almost continuous tremolo violin background music, while her father and mother behave in character, sometimes relaxing, sometimes being stern, and the flighty Mrs. Van Daan behaves in character, and the gluttonous Mr. Van Daan craves for cigarettes, and their son Peter is obsessed with his cat, and silly old Mr. Dussel supplies comic relief, and occasionally the music stops for suspense (ah, that's technique) when a noise is heard downstairs.

The director is a respected figure who has done fine things. I'm sorry he allowed himself to get mixed up with anything so tedious and pretentious.

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

In London: I'd still pick Bergman's *Summer With Monika* (24/12/58) for grown-up satisfaction. Though artificially led up to, the final sequence of the French *The Case of Dr. Laurent* (27/5/59) is highly impressive. *Some Like it Hot* (27/5/59) is exceedingly funny. I liked the German *The Devil's General* (3/6/59) and, with more reservations, the Hungarian *A Sunday*

Romance (13/5/59). *Room at the Top* (4/2/59) and *Gigi* (18/2/59) continue.

Among the releases: *Look Back in Anger* (30/6/59), which has the faults of the play but is a well-made and entertaining film; Lewis Milestone's *Pork Chop Hill* (3/6/59); *Ten Seconds to Hell* ("Survey," 6/5/59); and *Lonelyhearts*, which angered me very much by finally dissolving in a bath of sweet goo after being an excellent film for three-quarters of its length. — RICHARD MALLETT

AT THE OPERA

Der Rosenkavalier
(GLYNDEBOURNE FESTIVAL)

FOR ten minutes I thought we were in for disaster. In Mr. Christie's small theatre the Strauss orchestra, even at reduced string strength (e.g. four double-basses instead of eight), came down on us like a ton of rough-edged bricks, conducted by Leopold Ludwig with rubatos all his own. For the same reason the crowd scenes on Oliver Messel's admirably unassertive sets were a shoulder-to-shoulder wedge.

Looking back, these defects matter little. The fact is that this production by Carl Ebert, his last before retirement as Glyndebourne's artistic director, rehabilitates a libretto which, in this country, has been appallingly caricatured by over thirty years of vapid translation and farcical or otherwise ill-tuned acting. At last we are back where we were in the 'twenties, or almost so. I do not say (no survivor from those days could) that the (French) Marschallin, Régine Crespin, sings or looks as inevitable as Lotte Lehmann did; but her smile and shrug of ironic tolerance at Baron Ochs's gross goings-on exquisitely typified the mind and manners of Vienna's mid-eighteenth century *haut monde*. As to her singing, I have to report that for the first time in my life I blew my nose noisily after the curtain fell on her Monologue and that others near me were in like case.

A thing that helped to give the Monologue its authentic sweet sting was the marvellous grace, discretion and gallantry of the Oktavian, Elisabeth Soderstrom, who wore man's clothes like a girl yet without muffing *travesti* conventions in the least. She sang all night with pure, dead-on tone. She was precisely counterpointed in all these matters by the Sophie (Anneliese Rothenberger), a giddy, adorable thing with hints of latent tantrum.

Impossible to sing and act the Baron perfectly. Who can gabble endlessly and look in three directions at once? Again I think back to the 'twenties and Richard Mayr. Oscar Czerwenka survives the comparison by more than the skin of his teeth: he really does suggest the rustic nobleman, balancing each element against the other nicely and robustly. His singing was as good as need be and included in the first act eight bars of top F better in quality than commonly happens.

— CHARLES REID

ON THE AIR

Grandstand View

WHEN the advent of commercial television was being debated a few years ago I thought that I detected one scrap of silver lining in the black threatening cloud: I thought that commercial telly would glitter on every sporting occasion, that my armchair intake of football, cricket, tennis, athletics and so on would be vastly increased and improved. It seemed to me that sport, the great social leveller, would be the very thing to wrap round the commercials, to package the Westerns and beribbon the parlour games.

Well, I was wrong. For some reason or other ITV has decided to make a poor fist of sport, leaving the ring almost entirely to the BBC. One result of this is that the commercial channels seem strangely unventilated, hot and stuffy, and that the BBC, even on its dullest days, seems to have the windows open. Now this may be purely a personal impression, though I strongly recommend the Programme Contractors to assume that it is not. The general atmosphere of a channel is (or will be) as important to the viewer as the individual components, and ITV is surely putting itself at a disadvantage when in programme after programme it leaves the viewer with the feeling that it has bought its air at cut-rates from some subway.

Why does sport get such a poor showing on the commercial service? First, because it is so unpredictable. Programmes are trimmed into neat, twelve-minute sections and nothing is allowed to interfere with this arrangement—not even a kick for goal, a decisive putt or the possibility of a hat-trick. Channel 9 already gets into hot water when its "natural breaks" happen to clip a speech in mid-sentence: its life would not be worth living if it saw fit—as it surely would do—to substitute a jingle for the heavyweight's knock-out hook. Clearly commercial TV will be compelled before long to buy up big-time

sport and replan it for fireside consumption. Cricket could do with some of the millions now swelling the reserves of the big four programme companies and might well be improved by the introduction of twelve-minute overs. What about it, M.C.C.? And it should not be beyond the wit of Mr. Bernstein to make take-over bids for amateur boxing, show-jumping, table tennis, motor racing and the rest.

But of course the chief disadvantage of sport as a vehicle of commercial entertainment is its sectional appeal. All our national games and sports are minority interests (even soccer) and it would never do to aim at half a million viewers when eight million can be captured by a repeat showing of a fifth-rate American Western. The answer perhaps is a Ministry of Sport (Wolfenden?) and cash prizes by 'phone for viewers capable of answering ludicrously simple questions about the sporting event being televised. That might do the trick.

Meanwhile we have to make do with the BBC and programmes as good as "Summer Grandstand." This is a remarkable feat of television journalism in which the viewer with catholic interests is swept blissfully from sport to sport at bewildering speed. The other week I sat from 1.35 to 5.0 p.m., and scarcely had time to answer Peter West's invitation to take a cup of tea. There was the Test Match, the Northern Lawn Tennis Tournament, horse-racing from Kempton Park, film of the British Lions in Australia and professional boxing, and regular budgets of stop-press news. One moment I was watching Ulrich peeling off his socks in protest against the slippery state of the court, the next I was cheering in the winner of the Black Prince Handicap (No, that's a lie: I don't really go for racing), and the next I was ducking to a Trueman bumper. Great stuff.

In all fairness I must add that ITV had a programme of racing from Silverstone and Pontefract, but one "Afternoon Out" a week doesn't make a summer.

— BERNARD HOLLOWOOD

Man in Apron

by *LARRY*



Visiting Day

SO you're a new mother at Flannelfields? Oh, then you don't know about Visiting Days. I'll tell you what happens.

You've had your son's letter? "Church at nine-thirty. I can stay out till nine. Please bring my rockets, mouse, Bedford truck," or whatever. Yes, well don't be late, especially as you're new. Load up the car with the food hampers, requested items, etc. the night before and set off early on Sunday morning. Never mind about the weather. A picnic is always fun, and anyway you've *said* you're going, now.

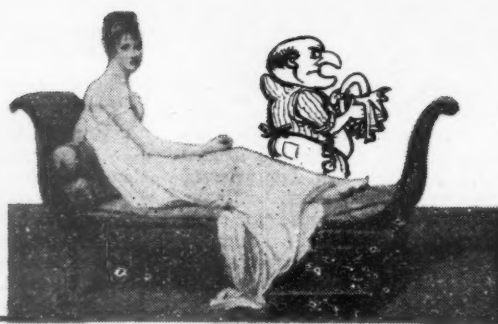
After church you must *find the Head-master*. He will be the grown-up one in the middle of the hall, among the two hundred other parents. (And if you ask something three feet high in grey flannel to help you, don't patronize it. It may be a *prefect*!)

When you have got him you must *have a few words* with the Head about your son's progress. In spite of his glazed look he will probably know which piece of grey flannel you are talking about. It's wonderful how they do. Oh, and by the way, *do* try not to confuse the assistant masters with the boys. I once asked a nice-looking laddie what form he was in and he turned out to be Mr. Jones, the geography master. So embarrassing.

Well, that done, you detach your son and his little friend from the swarm in the cloakrooms, put them in the back of the car with the sweets, and drive rapidly for two hours in any direction you choose until you come to a nice damp field for the picnic. As long as there are *enough* pork pies, sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, sausages, more sandwiches, chocolate and cake the children will enjoy this and it's *so* much cheaper than lunching in an hotel. If the little friend tells you how *he* always goes to the Ritz-Metropole at Flashton-on-Sea in his Bentley when *his* parents come down, just laugh merrily.

After lunch, as there are still seven hours to go, it's a good plan to make for the nearest cathedral, or if there isn't one, a Stately home will do. The boys will tip-toe round in their school walking-shoes, whispering during the services so as not to disturb them,

FOR WOMEN



and come out with an appetite for tea such as only culture can give. It's so good for their *backgrounds*, too.

You may be able to get tea at Ye Close Tea Shoppe by queuing in the passage for three quarters of an hour, but you *do* risk being told "Neau more teas Ai'm afraid" at the end by a lady in a smock. So perhaps you'd better go straight along to the Cathedral Hotel, even if it does look rather long dead from the outside. Inside it will be less like an *actual* morgue than like the lair of an animal that has gone into hibernation for the winter and forgotten to come out. However, in an hour or so you should succeed in acquiring some of the cakes the animal wrapped in Cellophane for its winter store and didn't need, and if you're lucky you may even catch a glimpse of the animal itself, stirring in the background.

After tea father may snatch a short nap on the sofa while the boys whip through the pile of old *Autocars*, and you—who knows?—may find a copy of *Vogue* as late as 1956! Keep your eye on the clock. Getting on now. At five-thirty or so, according to distance, you can head back towards school and arrive at the Flannelfield Arms around opening time. Father will be wide awake again by this time and you and he can join the two hundred other parents at the bar while the little ones suck lemonade in and out of straws in the lounge. No pushing, remember! We parents are always very polite to one another. The little man next you in pink may well be the Head Boy's father and you, after all, are very new still.

Dinner will follow in its own time and you'll get a table as soon as the head-waiter thinks fit. (Lukewarm fluid, probably pink, assorted cold fat with leaf and furniture polish, followed by wet biscuit on green stalks with some

yellow lumps, 12/6.) The boys will be telling you by now how awful the food is at school (just bacon rinds for breakfast *every* day, pale-blue potatoes, roots in their own earth and resurrection stew for lunch, boiled baby pudding, etc.) and making the most of their last opportunity to fill up decently. Torn with pity you promise to leave *hampers* of pie and *crates* of sweets behind you when you go, and to send on vast supplements of jam, cake, etc., as soon as you get home.

The sad hour arrives. At nine o'clock sharp you deposit them at Flannelfields where, while you gulp back your tears among the two hundred other mothers doing the same, the boys will thank you for an absolutely *super* time.

You won't be home till late, of course, but as you crawl in, feeble of foot perhaps, and empty of pocket certainly, you will have that wonderful feeling of a duty to the little ones done—and I mean *done*. Next Sunday—

What? Your daughter is at Giggleston Park, is she? You've had her letter about Visiting Day? Oh, then you'll be going there next week. Well, the mowing must wait.

—FRANCES KOENIG

Proposal Forms—5

MELISSA, my lily-maid, you are pure Burne-Jones. Those great starry eyes, that moonbeam-coloured skin, the long ropes of your hair, your quiet, mouse-like manner... Oh Melissa, you are unsullied Rottingdean.

You know, of course, how tenderly I would look after you. Iron tablets for your anaemia, long walks and early nights to bring roses to those pale, pale cheeks. All to have you as an ornament for my drawing-room, a charming

assistant to hand me my brushes as I paint. Above all to have you offer me your sweet, womanly company as a restraining influence upon my rough, male ways.

Thank God, Melissa, ah thank God, that you have not betrayed the high vocation of your Sex with foolish talk about emancipation and careers. (Please don't interrupt, my child.) As if the Fair should bother their pretty, muddled little heads with sordid practical matters, or soil their white fingers with dirty old politics. (Damn you, girl, will you keep quiet.)

It has become clear to me that what Woman needs is a being who will be to her at once Knight Errant, Husband, Father, Leader, Master and Friend. Such a being, Melissa, I flatter myself I am.

What's this? You are standing as the Liberal candidate for Cleethorpes, and Daddy was a quite adequate Father figure in the first place, thank you very much!

I'm All Right, Jill

SISTERS, to be a woman it is a fearful thing;

It is to have (they tell us) a smaller, lighter brain;
No talent for creation or abstract arguing;

A rather cruder palate, and less response to pain;

A tendency to gossip, a yen for tidiness,

A weakness for a bargain, a craving for a scene;

A slavery to fashion, particularly dress;

Ineptitude at grasping the easiest machine—

Sisters, how may we suffer our sex's wretched lot,

Making our feeble efforts to throw a tennis-ball,

Trying so hard to care if the claret's cold or hot,

Flogging our intuition, thinking that Love is All?

Nay, sisters, we can take it. Hat-happy; always late;

Looking quite madly knock-kneed when running for a bus,

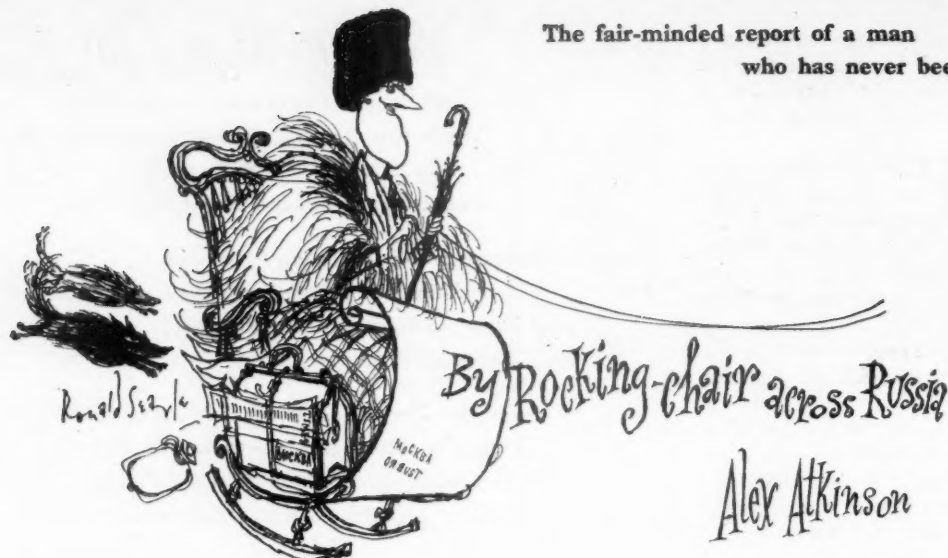
We still like being women. Men's is the worsor fate.

Think, sisters, to be one of them married to one of us!

— ANGELA MILNE



The fair-minded report of a man
who has never been there



Alex Atkinson

III

MY MEETING WITH KHRUSHCHEV

QUITE a number of Russians make no secret of the fact that they belong to the Communist party. The rest (a hundred and ninety million odd) either haven't got around to joining, what with one thing and another, or are just biding their time, waiting to see which way the cat will jump.

"I reckon we ought to give it a fair trial," said a waiter in my hotel, "before we take it too seriously. Maybe it will work, maybe it won't. After all, Rome didn't fall in a day; and, as the Russian proverb says, a big bear with short legs is not necessarily any harder of hearing than a small bear with long legs if the wind is in the south."

The results of a recent nation-wide poll, published in *Pravda* under a headline saying *Communism Here to Stay, Some Opine*, are very revealing in this connection. In answer to the question "Whom do you love?" 71 per cent said "N. Khrushchev," 23 per cent couldn't spell it, 6 per cent said "Lenin," and one fool said "Mrs. Natasha Komsoldjenskaya down the street." In answer to the question "If there were a General Election to-morrow how would you vote?", 20 per cent said "Is that gun loaded?" 40 per cent said "Don't know," 15 per cent said "What the hell is a General Election?", and the rest have mysteriously disappeared.

The fact is, of course, that the

average Russian—a short, squat man with a fund of jokes, three furnished rooms, one suit, two children and a secondhand sledge, who can recite the whole of the 1945 game played in Moscow between Smyslov and Rudakovsky (the latter using the Scheveningen Variation of the Sicilian Defence) from P—K4 P—QB4 right through to R x R! (resigns)—has never been particularly interested in politics, and has tended down the ages to take his rulers with something of a pinch of salt. If you look at the story of Russia you must see that on the whole he has been a pretty shrewd judge at that, because the reins have been in the hands of one bloodstained upstart after another since the dawn of history.

I soon found it more or less impossible to talk either history or world politics to the ordinary people of Moscow—partly because these subjects were superseded years ago in Russian schools by Fairy Tales for Little Folk (from *Columbus the Capitalist Pawn* to *Stalin the Cuddly Toy*) and Advanced Fairy Tales for Larger Folk (from *Clive the Indian Butcher* to *Stalin the Two-headed Fiend*); and partly because whenever I put my simple preliminary question ("Any of you chaps play Monopoly?") the room would tend to empty in a sinister way. Drinks would be left half-finished, and small spy-holes would slide open in the panelling, there would be the unmistakable clicking of safety-catches behind innocent-looking chiffoniers, and stocky men in navy blue suits

would come in and ask to see my visa. This is all due to the Soviet Penal Code, under which the Russians are forbidden to divulge certain statistical information to prying foreigners. It can be very frustrating. Nobody would tell me, for example, the date of the Treaty of Brest Litovsk, Trotsky's birthday, the time of the last train for Smolensk, or how old they were. After a few days Moscow becomes a closed book. You can't find anyone's 'phone number for love or money, and if you're asked to a party you're given the address in a sealed envelope, to be opened outside the city limits half an hour before zero. When you get there there is no such place, but you are met by a hooded stranger who bundles you into a plain van, blindfolds you, and takes you somewhere else. When you greet your host at last he pretends he doesn't know you, and insists not only that there never was a party but also that it took place the day before yesterday. I once asked a militiaman the way to Number 7 Suvorovsky Boulevard, and the following conversation ensued:

"There is no Suvorovsky Boulevard in Moscow. Perhaps you are thinking of Manchester."

"But I have it here in black-and-white. Suvorovsky Boulevard."

"What you have is an impudent piece of imperialist propaganda."

"I don't think so. It's a bus guide."

"Hum. Supposing there were such a place, which for the moment I

emphatically deny, why would you wish to visit Number 7?"

"Because Nicolai Vasilievitch Gogol died there."

"A close relative?"

"No."

"Yet you wish to claim the body. This is strange."

"Good heavens, man, he died in 1852!"

"How do you know that?"

"It is common knowledge in England! He wrote *Dead Souls* and *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*, and he died in 1852!"

"It's not convincing. Gogol isn't a Moscow name. Perhaps he was one of the Verkhoyansk Gogols?"

"He was born in Sorochintsi."

"I can't place him. Did he have a drooping moustache?"

"Now look here, my good fellow, I believe you are being deliberately obstructive."

"I cannot understand your craving for Suvorovsky Boulevard. If I were you I would go to the Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor, at Number 2 Novaya Bozhedomka."

"Why?"

"Because, between ourselves, Dostoevsky was born there. Otherwise I would go to the Lenin Library. It has seventeen million books."

"Oh, very well. Direct me to the Mariinsky Hospital for the Poor."

"There is no such place. You must be mad."

Eventually, in desperation, I agreed to let him direct me to the headquarters of the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations With Foreign Countries. When I got there it turned out to be a cinema, and I saw *Broadway Melody of 1932* and a second feature called *The Steel Foundry from Outer Space*.

Happening to bump into Khrushchev a few days later at a cocktail party in one or other of the embassies I complained rather testily to him about the secretiveness of his subjects.

"Yes, I know," he said. "I have the same trouble myself. Nobody tells me anything. 'Whatever became of Kagano-vitch?' I keep on asking my grocer, 'or

Shepilov or Malenkov or Molotov?' And d'you think he'll answer? Not he. Ha, ha, ha. Still, as our Russian proverb says, what the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over."

"That's an English proverb," I said.

"Oh, come, come," said Khrushchev. "You'll be telling me next you invented lampshades and custard. I suppose you want to have a long talk with me, do you, so that you can sell it to the magazines and be worshipped as a prophet?"

"Yes," I said.

"Three o'clock Friday," said Khrushchev, and moved away across the crowded room to chuck a ballerina under the chin.

These diplomatic cocktail parties and receptions, by the way, are a great feature of life in the Russian capital, and I was absolutely worn out in less than a week. Night after night the long black limousines converge on one or other of the embassies, filled with stony-faced





ministers out for a jolly debauch and a chat about inter-continental ballistic missiles. Horse-drawn sleighs jingle through the Moscow dark, sending up showers of finely powdered snow. Behind the steaming horses visiting bigwigs from Afghanistan or Poland or the *Reader's Digest* huddle under rugs rehearsing their *mots* and party pieces. Inside the great houses all is warmth and glitter. Members of the Presidium mingle freely with anyone who can't conveniently escape, laughing uproariously at every chance remark and trying as hard as they can to get at least one Western journalist drunk. Carefully prepared insults are hissed in corners. Upon the marble staircases, under the chandeliers, in the richly carpeted halls and corridors, and even in the press and bustle round the buffet table, international incidents flare up and die like fireworks. Political faces beam and sweat, the Red Army officers click their spurs at ingenuities from the Moscow Art Theatre, hidden orchestras play selections from Billy Mayerl, and incensed ambassadors fly at one another's throats in an endless comic opera of diplomacy. At the centre of things stands Khrushchev, sipping a raspberry cordial as he pretends to listen to the gabble of interpreters. At one moment he will fondle some slip of a girl from the Bolshoi, complimenting her upon an *entrechat* which she thought had passed

unnoticed; at another he will dig some terrified old bureaucrat from an outlying province in the ribs and accuse him of being hand-in-glove with the fanged monsters of Wall Street. Truly there is no end to the gaiety, the splendour, the romance of these diplomatic functions.

By contrast, my formal meeting with Khrushchev on that fateful Friday afternoon was stark and businesslike. It was obvious that he realized the seriousness of the occasion. He knew as well as I did precisely what was at stake.

The day was overcast, and as I walked into the Kremlin by the entrance marked:

INTERVIEWS
HEART-TO-HEART CHATS
APPOINTMENT ONLY
CLOSED SATURDAYS

I noticed that icicles hung by the wall. I was informally searched, and led into a clean waiting-room.

"There's been rather a rush to-day," said the guard. Then he handed me a copy of last week's *Krokodil*, poked the stove, and went away.

Three quarters of an hour later I was taken to the conference room, where Khrushchev stood with a group of advisers. He shook my hand warmly and we all sat down. He was dressed in his customary light suit and cream-coloured shirt. I wore a jacket of herring-bone tweed, an old pair of grey trousers, white shirt, club tie, brown shoes, and thick woollen underwear. Marelevsky, on Khrushchev's right, was in a dark business suit. Ajonev, on Derov's left, had a stiff white collar. Borayev, on Ajonev's right, was on Andrei Bobrezhnev's right and wore his uniform with the two top buttons of his tunic unfastened. Kirilin was on Syzhov's left, and Kubukin sat between Petrolenski and Nicolai Bonzoi, chief accountant in the Office of Works and Dogma, who wore green knitted socks and a home-made wig. Belishova was not present, and nor were Pavel Pavlovich Lobanov, Henry R. Potemkin or Vladimir Semiyenov. I did not ask why.

I sat facing the Russians across the table, with one hand palm downwards on my piece of blotting-paper and the other held in the air ready for any small gesture that might seem appropriate. The Russians, for their part, sat facing me across the table. It seemed a fair enough arrangement.

After a long silence the interpreter asked me, politely but meaningly, whether I realized it was very nearly tea-time. I then read a prepared statement of thirty-odd pages, and Khrushchev said he couldn't make head or tail of it.

"It seemed clear enough to me," said the interpreter. "He says there's tension in the world."

"Tension be damned," said Khrushchev. He pointed a chubby finger in my direction. "If you'd stop sending children-in-arms up chimneys," he said, "you might be in a position to talk."

"I don't send anybody up chimneys," I said, knowing full well that the Russians admire courage, and even recklessness, in debate.

"I don't give a hang *who* sends them," said Khrushchev. "You get them down, that's all I'm saying! Get them down, and quick, or U.N. will hear about it, don't you fret!"

"We seem to have reached a deadlock," I said.

"That's not important," said Khrushchev, rising jovially. "The important thing is that we have aired our differences. Good day. If you will call at the porter's lodge on the way out he will give you back your wallet, keys and personal belongings. Glossy photographs of myself stepping out of an aeroplane are also available, price forty kopecks."

"Good day, gentlemen," I said.

It was exactly seventeen minutes to five. As I emerged into the Red Square a small crowd of bystanders, who had been waiting in the bitter wind to cheer my departure, gathered eagerly around the car, reaching out to touch me, so that they might have something to tell their grand-children.

Next week: A Trip to the Caucasus

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